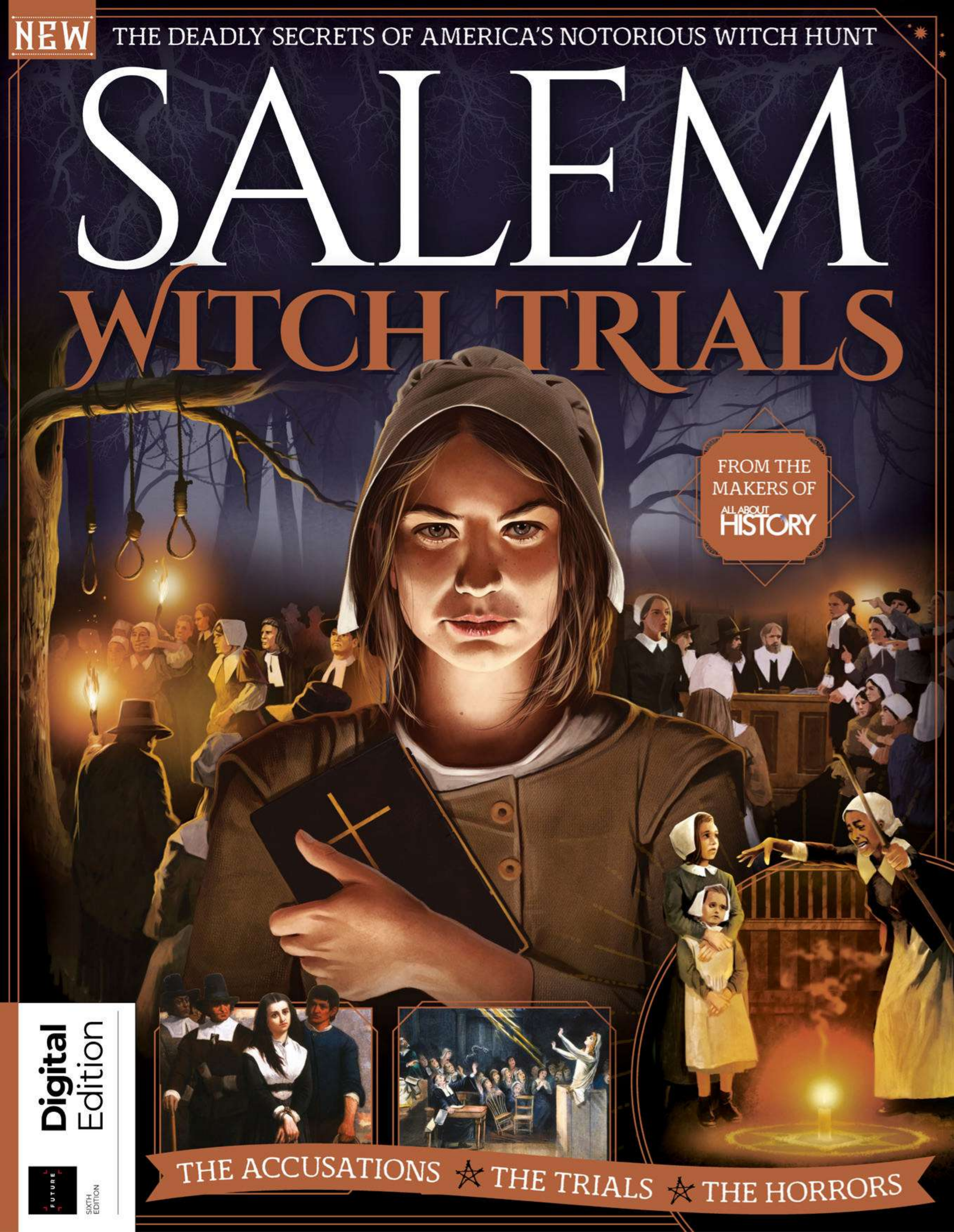
NEW

THE DEADLY SECRETS OF AMERICA'S NOTORIOUS WITCH HUNT

SALEM WITCH TRIALS



FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

THE ACCUSATIONS ☆ THE TRIALS ☆ THE HORRORS

Digital Edition

SIXTH EDITION

WELCOME TO

SALEM WITCH TRIALS

For over 300 years it has been a macabre historical mystery: what caused the people of a God-fearing small rural village near the Massachusetts coast to turn on their own townsfolk, and why? Theories abound, ranging from diverse physical or psychological sicknesses to avarice and spite, but to really probe this question, we have to delve deep into the unique history of Salem Village and its people. Tendrils of the story stretch back centuries, taking in such diverse factors as factional dissatisfaction with the English Reformation, the delusions of a witchcraft-obsessed king, the dream of a new Jerusalem, the harsh realities of early colonisation, a heady brew of European and other superstitions, anti-authority rebellion, the dysfunctional relationships of several generations of a few close-knit families, war, famine, pestilence, and death. One cold, hungry winter, these disparate elements came together and took root in the jittery, traumatised soil of the Salem Village community. What grew from them would become an exceptional, twisted hybrid of Puritan ideology, Pilgrim experience, and unfettered panic. It would sow the seeds of American history's deadliest witch hunt and one of its most notorious miscarriages of justice: the Salem witch trials.

FUTURE

SALEM
WITCH TRIALS

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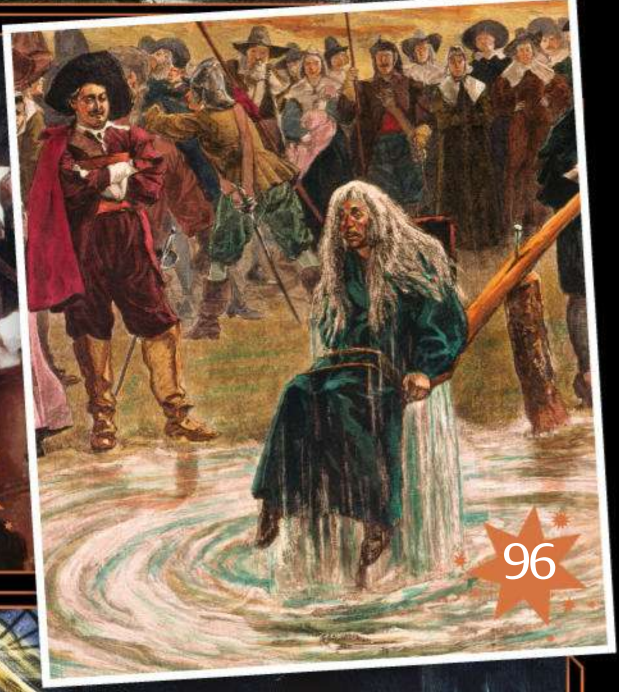

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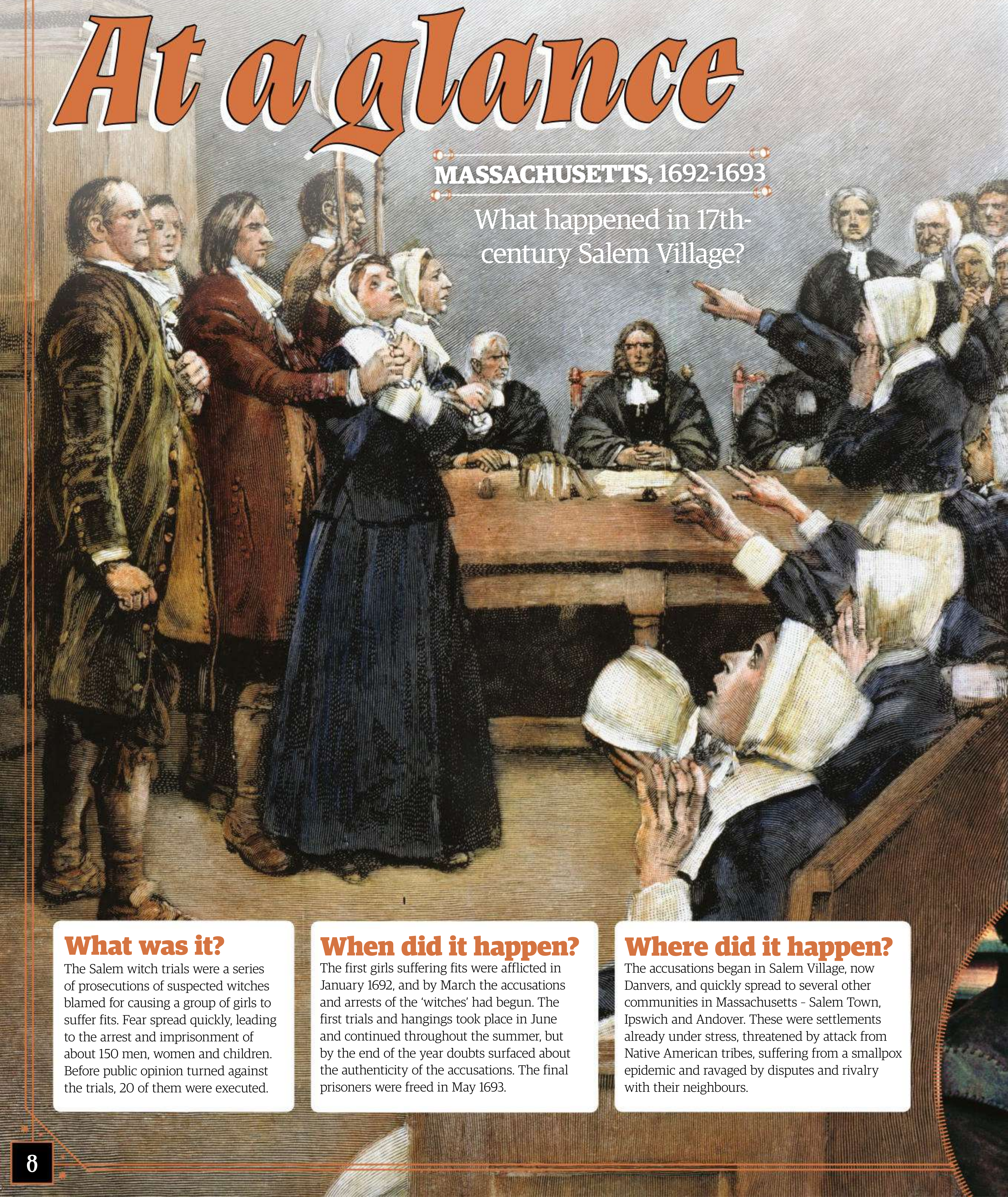


At a glance

MASSACHUSETTS, 1692-1693

What happened in 17th-century Salem Village?

What was it?

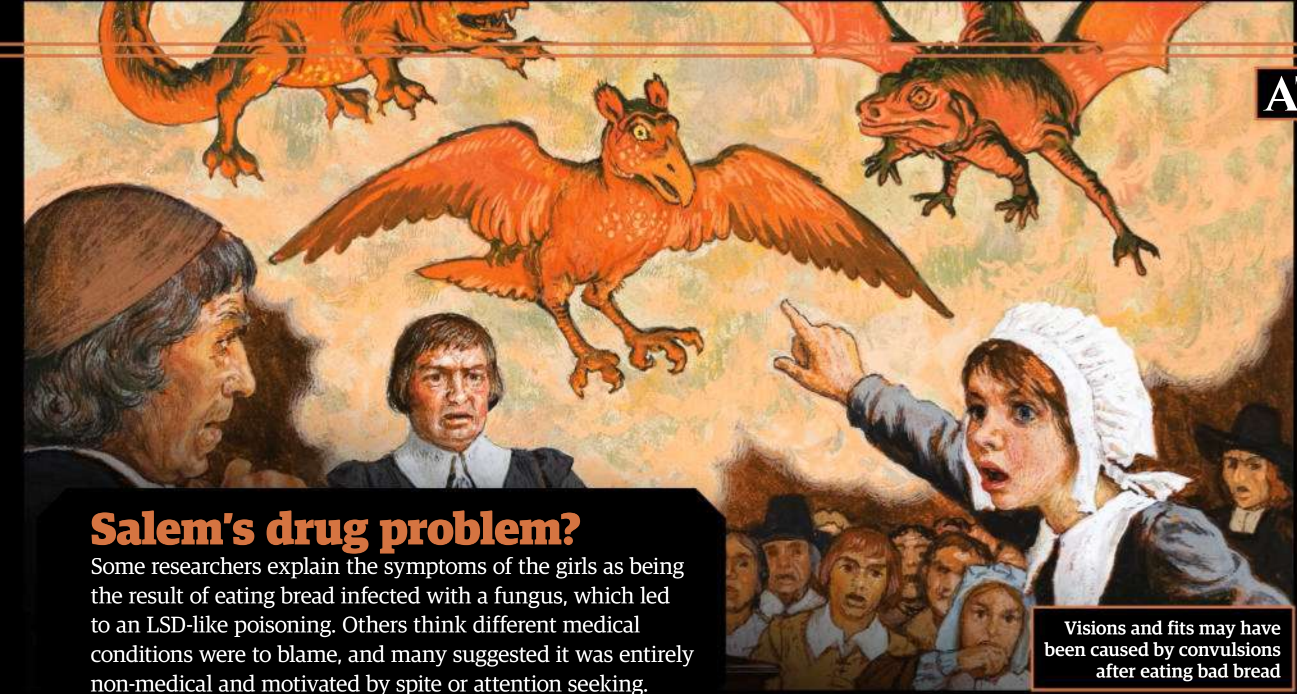
The Salem witch trials were a series of prosecutions of suspected witches blamed for causing a group of girls to suffer fits. Fear spread quickly, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of about 150 men, women and children. Before public opinion turned against the trials, 20 of them were executed.

When did it happen?

The first girls suffering fits were afflicted in January 1692, and by March the accusations and arrests of the 'witches' had begun. The first trials and hangings took place in June and continued throughout the summer, but by the end of the year doubts surfaced about the authenticity of the accusations. The final prisoners were freed in May 1693.

Where did it happen?

The accusations began in Salem Village, now Danvers, and quickly spread to several other communities in Massachusetts – Salem Town, Ipswich and Andover. These were settlements already under stress, threatened by attack from Native American tribes, suffering from a smallpox epidemic and ravaged by disputes and rivalry with their neighbours.



Visions and fits may have been caused by convulsions after eating bad bread

Image Source ✱ Look and Learn.

Salem's drug problem?

Some researchers explain the symptoms of the girls as being the result of eating bread infected with a fungus, which led to an LSD-like poisoning. Others think different medical conditions were to blame, and many suggested it was entirely non-medical and motivated by spite or attention seeking.

Coffin in the glass

It all began when Betty Parris and Abigail Williams broke an egg white into a glass of water to see what shape it would take, thinking it would indicate the profession of their future husbands. When the egg appeared as a coffin, Betty fell into a hysterical fit, which soon spread to others.

How to survive

Most of the people who were accused avoided death. The best way to escape the hangman's noose was to confess to witchcraft. Many also tried to help themselves by accusing others, fuelling more arrests. Interrogators often chose easy targets who they thought would confess. Torture was used if they did not.

A sinister motive

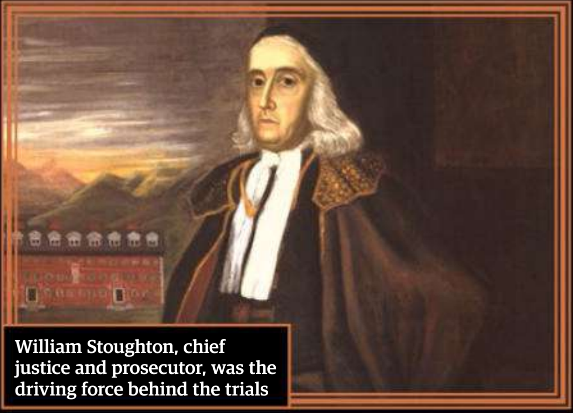
Many of the accused had crossed Salem resident Thomas Putnam over previous years. This has led to suggestions that the trials were abused by him to settle old scores and grudges. Of the 21 accusation records that survive, 15 were signed by at least one member of the Putnam family.

More weight

Five men were among the 19 who were hanged, while Giles Corey was pressed to death because he refused to enter a plea. Heavier and heavier rocks were placed on his chest until his ribs cracked and he could not breathe. According to tradition, his last words were "more weight."

Why were they believed?

Belief that the Devil gave witches the power to harm others was widespread in Puritan New England. Much of the proof used was spectral evidence, where accusers said they had a vision of the person who was afflicting them. When spectral evidence was deemed inadmissible, the trials came to an abrupt end.



William Stoughton, chief justice and prosecutor, was the driving force behind the trials

Image Source ✱ Harvard University Art Museum.

Image Source ✱ Topfoto.

The Crucible

Playwright Arthur Miller saw parallels between the Salem witch trials and life in 1950s America. He wrote *The Crucible* as a critical allegory of McCarthyism. He fictionalised many aspects of the witch trials, especially the invention of a love story between Abigail Williams and John Proctor – in real life, she was 11 and he was 60.

KEY FIGURES

Tituba
Unknown-unknown

A Native American or Carib slave, Tituba was the first to confess to using witchcraft after being beaten by her owner.

Cotton Mather
1663-1728

A Puritan minister and vigorous supporter of the trials, Mather was influential in the creation of the courts for the trials.

William Stoughton
1631-1701

Chief justice of the court, Stoughton was in charge of the trials and a firm believer in the use of spectral evidence.

Rebecca Nurse
1621-1692

Initially cleared of witchcraft, Nurse was executed after Stoughton urged the jury to reconsider its verdict.

William Phips
1651-1695

Governor of Massachusetts, Phips established the court and later disbanded it, perhaps because his wife was accused.

KEY EVENTS

The hysteria begins
20 January 1692

Two girls begin to suffer fits that are quickly deemed to be the result of witchcraft.

The authorities become involved
29 February 1692

Thomas and Edward Putnam file a complaint to magistrates and the first arrest warrants for witches are issued.

The first victim
10 June 1692

Bridget Bishop is the first to be hanged for witchcraft, two days after her trial.

The deadliest day
22 September 1692

Eight people are hanged but critics of the hysteria are becoming more vocal.

Beginning of the end
6 December 1692

A new court is created to deal with witch trials and spectral evidence is banned.

Main Image Source ✱ Topfoto.

Salem witch trials

The real story behind *The Crucible*

22 SEPTEMBER, 1692

The air crackled with tension as the people of Salem, Massachusetts, gathered to witness the latest round of justice. The eight men and women who had been brought by cart were neighbours, even friends and family - but this only made their betrayal sharper. For those eight - Martha Corey, Alice Parker, Mary Parker, Margaret Scott, Mary Eastey, Ann Pudeator, Wilmot Redd and Samual Wardwell Sr - were all guilty of the most hideous and unforgivable of sins in God's eyes: witchcraft.

There was no doubt of their guilt. The cart that had carried the condemned on their final journey had been beset with difficulties - the Devil's work, the people had muttered, but even the Devil could not save his own now. Martha Corey prayed most earnestly before she was turned off into oblivion, and Mary Eastey's moving farewell to those that she would leave behind caused many tears from those who listened before the rope was set about her neck. But many others remained unmoved - these "Firebrands of Hell", as one observer called them, were getting no less than they deserved.

Mercifully, although the gathered group did not yet know it, this would be the last time their beleaguered community would witness the death of a witch on the gallows. There must have been many there that day, accuser and accused alike, who wondered how they had come to this.

> The people were convinced that the Devil was real, allowing for the accusations to be taken seriously against so many

It all began in Salem Village in January of that year when 11-year-old Abigail Williams and her cousin nine-year-old Betty Parris fell ill. Children sickened all the tine, but this was no ordinary illness. The girls suffered from fits so terrible that it made others weep to watch them: at times they were struck dumb, at others they seemed to be choked of their very breath by and invisible force. As is that were not bad enough, they complained of being pinched

Image Source ✱ Joe Cummings.

A village torn apart

There wasn't a soul in Salem not affected by the witch trials

Mary Whittredge

Mary Green, escaped

Roger Toothaker, died before trial probably due to torture or maltreatment

Hannah Tyler

William Barker, Sr.

Job Tookey

Lydia Dustin, found not guilty but died in custody

Edward Farrington

Nehemiah Abbot, Jr.

William Barker, Jr.

Mary Marston

Sarah Osborne, died in prison before she could be tried

Sarah Bishop

Arthur Abbot

Mary Barker

Abigail Rowe

Rev. Francis Dane, minister in Andover, Massachusetts

Abigail Barker

Margaret Prince

Sarah Cloyce, sister of Rebecca Nurse and Mary Eastey

Edward Bishop

Sarah Rist

John Porter Sr.

Rachel Clinton

Sarah Swift

John Bradstreet

Abigail Faulkner, Sr, who was pregnant, pardoned

Mary Lacey Sr., pled guilty and pardoned

† Bridget Bishop

Mary Bradbury, escaped

† Rebecca Nurse

† Susannah Martin

† Elizabeth Howe

† Sarah Wildes

† Rev. George Burroughs

† George Jacobs, Sr.

† Martha Carrier

† Martha Corey

† John Proctor

Elizabeth Booth (aged 18)
Elizabeth Hubbard (aged 17)
Mercy Lewis (aged 17)
Elizabeth "Betty" Parris (aged 9)
Ann Putnam, Jr. (aged 12)
Margaret Rule (age unknown)
Susannah Sheldon (aged 18)
Mercy Short (aged 15)
Martha Sprague (aged 16)
Mary Walcott (aged 17)
Mary Warren (aged 20)
Abigail Williams (aged 11)

Sarah Wardwell, "confessed" and pardoned

† John Willard

† Alice Parker

† Mary Eastey

† Mary Parker

Ann Foster, died in custody

† Ann Pudeator

† Margaret Scott

† Sarah Good

Elizabeth Proctor, who was pregnant, pardoned

† Samuel Wardwell, Sr.

† Wilmot Redd

Dorcas Hoar, "confessed" and pardoned

Bethiah Carter Sr.

Giles Corey pressed to death

Edward Bishop III

Stephen Johnson

Mary Bridges, Sr.

Katerina Biss

Elizabeth Dicer

Rev. John Busse, minister in Wells, Maine

Thomas Carrier, Jr.

William Proctor

Bethiah Carter Jr.

Mary Bridges, Jr.

Sarah Buckley

Mercy Wardwell

Tituba

Rebecca Dike

Sarah Carrier

Sarah Bridges

Phoebe Day

Dorothy Faulkner

Mehitable Downing

Sarah Cole

Dudley Bradstreet

Thomas Farrer, Sr., spent 7 months in Boston jail before being released

Sarah Dustin

Edward Farrington, escaped

Margaret Jacobs

Daniel and Lydia Eames

Eunice Frye

Rachel Vinson

Anne Bradstreet

Sarah Hawkes, Jr.

Esther Elwell

Sarah Hale, wife of Rev. John Hale, minister in Beverly, Massachusetts

John Alden, Jr.

Margaret Prince

Rebecca Jacobs

Hezekiah Usher II

George Jacobs, Jr.

Israel Porter

Elizabeth Johnson, Sr.

Abigail Rowe

Mary Tyler

James Howe, husband of Elizabeth Howe

Daniel Andrew

Thomas Carrier, Jr.

William Barker, Sr.

Hannah Post

Ann Foster

Mary Lacey, Jr.,daughter of Mary Lacey, Sr. and granddaughter of Ann Foster

Edward Wooland

Abigail Faulkner, Jr.

Mary Rowe

Elizabeth Dicer

Mary Toothaker, wife of Roger Toothaker and sister of Martha Carrier

Susannah Post

Joan Penney

Frances Hutchins

Mary Rowe

Sarah Carrier

Dorothy Good, daughter of Sarah Good

Mary and Philip English

Susanna Rootes, either released or found not guilty

Sarah Wilson

Mary Black, slave who was arrested and indicted but never went to trial

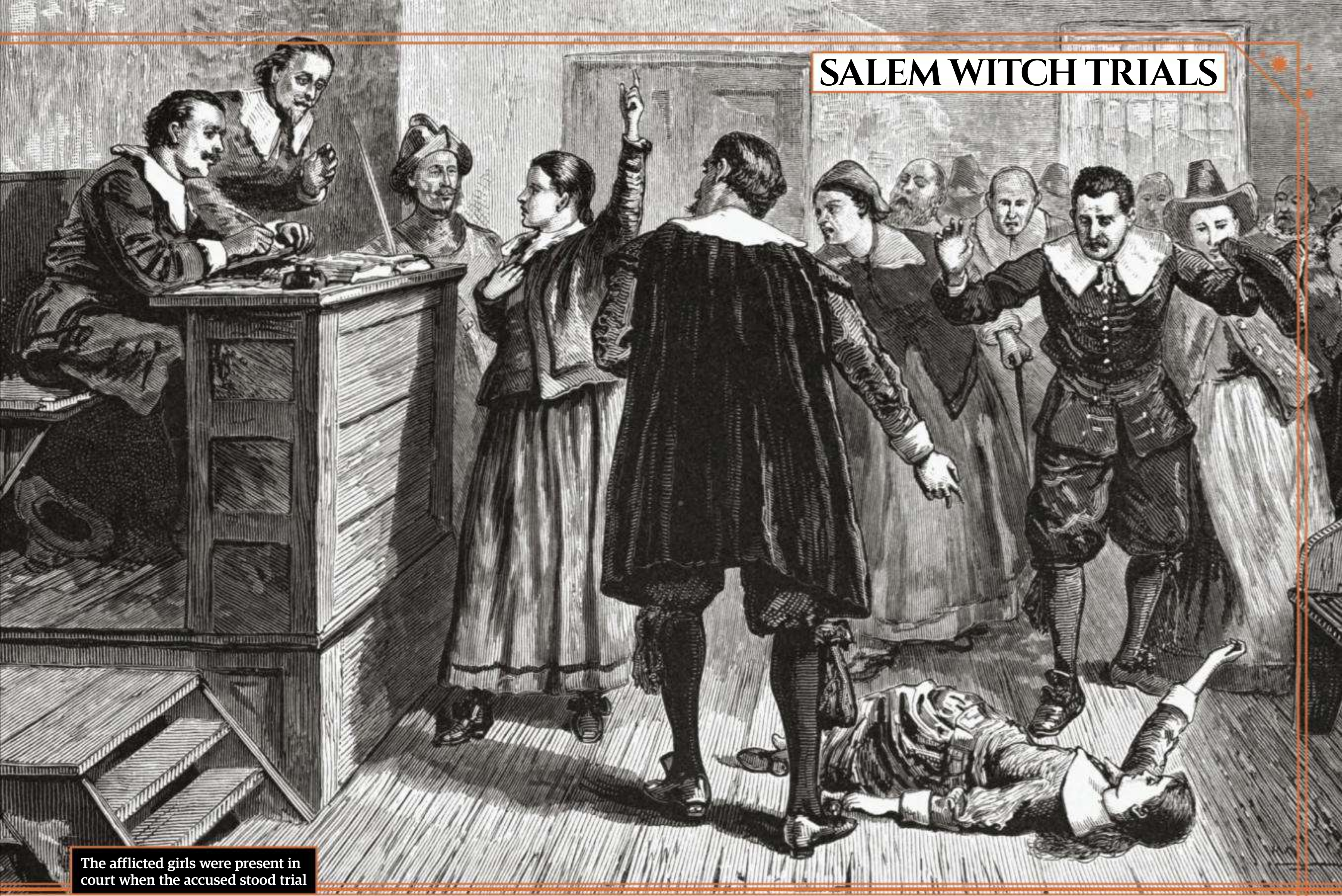
Lady Mary Phips, wife of Massachusetts Governor Sir William Phips

Elizabeth Hutchinson Hart, released after 7 months in jail after her son Thomas filed petitions on her behalf

Mercy, daughter of Sarah Good, born and died in prison some time prior to her mother's execution.

Margaret Sheaf Thacher, Jonathan Corwin's mother-in-law

⬜ Afflicted 🟥 Convicted († Hanged) 🟧 Accused



The afflicted girls were present in court when the accused stood trial

Image Source ✱ Samuel Walker and Company.

and pricked, their bodies pulled and twisted about against their will.

In desperation, the Reverend Samuel Parris, Betty's father, sought medical help. Far from offering hope, however, the doctor's verdict was grave indeed. The girls were not stricken by any ordinary illness. Their suffering was the work of the Devil and his cohorts - they had been bewitched.

While the family reeled from this pronouncement, two other girls from Salem Village, Ann Putnam Junior and Elizabeth Hubbard, started to display the same symptoms as their friends. As local residents debated this alarming development, neighbour Mary Sibley took matters into her own hands. She instructed Tituba, one of the Parris's slaves, to prepare a 'witch cake'. Rye and the urine of the afflicted girls was mixed together and baked: the 'cake' was then fed to the family dog, which was carefully watched for signs that would undeniably confirm the cause of the girls' suffering. Carried out no doubt in good faith, Tituba would come to regret her part in the matter, as once the cake was consumed, the girls cried out that Tituba herself had been the one to bewitch them.

When Reverend Parris discovered what had been done, he was horrified: counter-magic such as this was no better than the very evil they were trying to battle, and to make matters worse, the finger had been pointed at his own servant. When questioned, Tituba denied being a witch or harming the girls, but it was too late. The girls continued to insist that she was responsible, and also named Salem women Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne as Tituba's accomplices.

After being formally complained against, the three women were examined by John Hathorne in the local meetinghouse - the largest building in Salem Village. The room was packed as neighbours came to hear what the witches would say. The women were by turns frightened, eloquent and defiant. Sarah Good had done nothing, she said, but the blame could be placed firmly at Sarah Osborne's door. Osborne likewise denied her guilt, pointing out that she was not to blame if the Devil chose to use a spirit in her image to do his mischief. Then

> Dorothy, or Dorcas, Good, whose testimony convicted her own mother, was only four years old when she confessed to being a witch

Could you be a witch?

Tick the boxes that apply to you - if you mark three or more, it's very likely that you're under Satan's spell

- I am over the age of 50 ☐
- I am unmarried ☐
- I am widowed ☐
- I am married ☐
- I have moles ☐
- I talk a lot ☐
- I dress provocatively ☐
- I own a cat ☐
- I have defended someone already accused ☐
- I am in a dispute with an influential member of the community ☐
- I argue with my husband ☐
- I am rich ☐
- I am poor ☐
- I don't go to church ☐

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

Here are some of the top theories put forward to explain the outbreak of accusations

Hand of God

The people of Salem believed that the trials were punishment for not following the will of God. They had sinned, and because of their "inordinate love of the world", God had let the Devil trick them into accusing and executing their neighbours.

Fraud

A popular and early theory, the girls were, quite simply, faking it. They wanted attention and saw their "fits" and other torments as a way to get this, bringing them the status that they craved.

Acid trip

It has been suggested that the symptoms displayed by the girls were actually caused by ergotism or rye poisoning. The afflicted villagers had eaten bread made from the infected rye, leading to the alarming fits and convulsions.

Indian scare

The Second Indian War overlapped with the Salem trials and the fear of the witch within may have stemmed from fear of Indian attack on the frontiers. Several of the girls who made accusations at Salem were refugees from areas affected by the fighting.

Hysteria

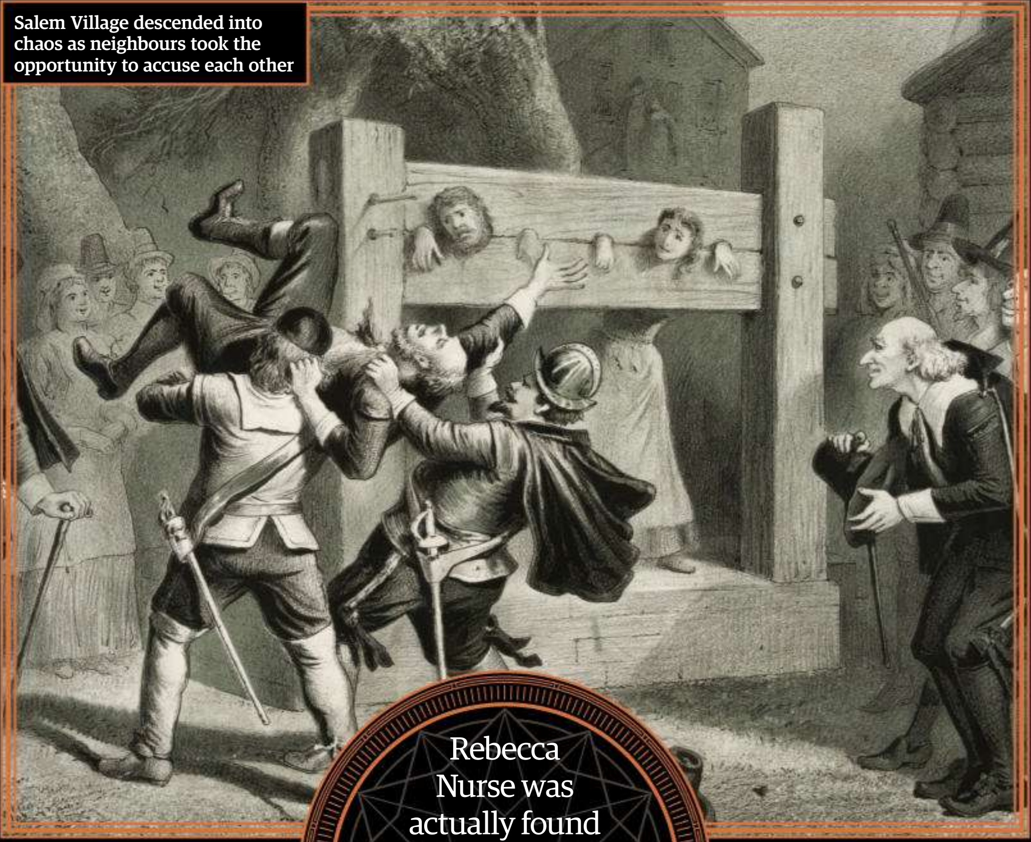
The girls may have been genuinely experiencing hysteria: suffering hormonal and biological changes due to their age and living through a time of great upheaval, their fits were an involuntary display of the stresses placed upon their minds and bodies.

Biological pathogen

Illness of a physical kind may have been responsible after all. It has been highlighted that the animals of Salem likewise experienced the same bizarre symptoms as the girls, and that these fitted with those of epidemic encephalitis.

Misogyny and repression

Women with control of property considered beyond the norm were over-represented in those accused and executed at Salem. These "independent" women were seen as a threat to the established Puritan patriarchy and therefore needed to be removed.



Salem Village descended into chaos as neighbours took the opportunity to accuse each other

Image Source ✱ Look and Learn.

Rebecca Nurse was actually found innocent by the jury, but the verdict was changed to guilty once some people protested

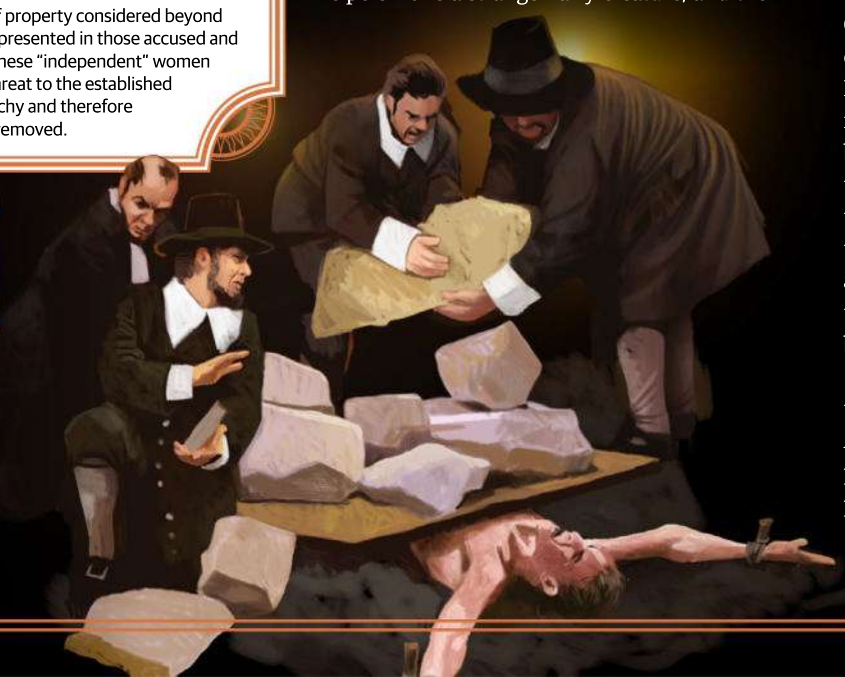
it was Tituba's turn. She confessed to a stunned room that she was after all guilty of causing harm to the girls through malefic magic.

She had not wanted to harm the girls, Tituba insisted to the gathered crowd of neighbours, it had been only at the behest of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne that she had done so. She described in very great detail the familiar spirits that her associates used to do their terrible deeds. Sarah Good had a yellow bird that sucked her between her fingers, and Sarah Osborne had two spirit helpers - one a strange hairy creature, and the other that had a woman's head and legs, but also wings.

The afflicted girls, present in the room and making a display of their sufferings, fell silent as Tituba spoke. It was a brief respite, however, and they began to suffer afresh as she finished. This was, Tituba announced, Sarah Good's fault, and the wailing girls agreed. The session descended into chaos, leaving the good people of Salem with much to talk about as they left for their homes.

Over the next few weeks, the girls continued to suffer. Worse, more came forward with the same terrifying symptoms, and others including Martha Corey, Dorothy, or Dorcas, Good (the four-year-old daughter of Sarah Good) and the elderly Rebecca Nurse were accused and arrested. Tituba confessed further, saying that she had signed the Devil's book with her own blood, and that she had seen the signatures of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne there too. Throughout March and April, the terrified community turned on itself - accusations and arrests snowballing in a vain attempt to rid themselves of the demonic curse that seemed to be upon them.

Into this confusion came Sir William Phips, the newly appointed governor of Massachusetts. Arriving on 14 May, he found to his horror the province in utter chaos, with no less than 38 people imprisoned on suspicion of witchcraft.

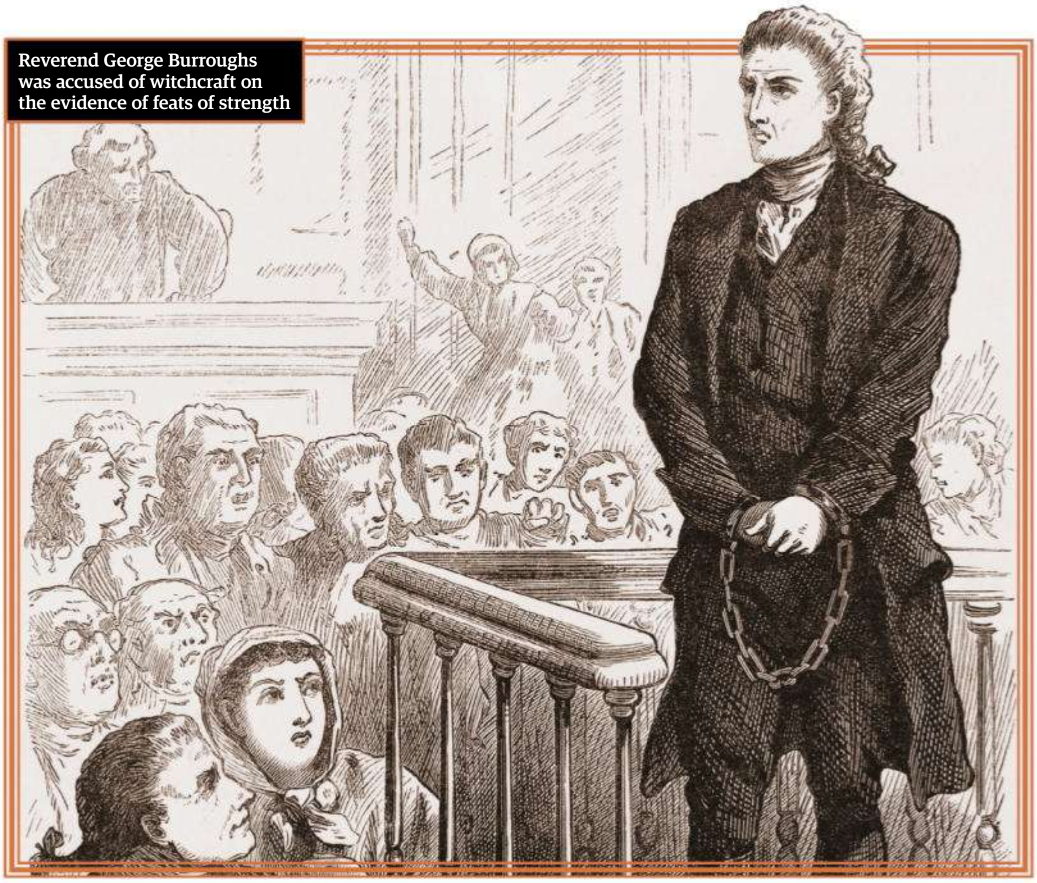


Giles Corey was subjected to pressing in an effort to force him to plead but refused and died

Image Source ✱ Joe Cummings.

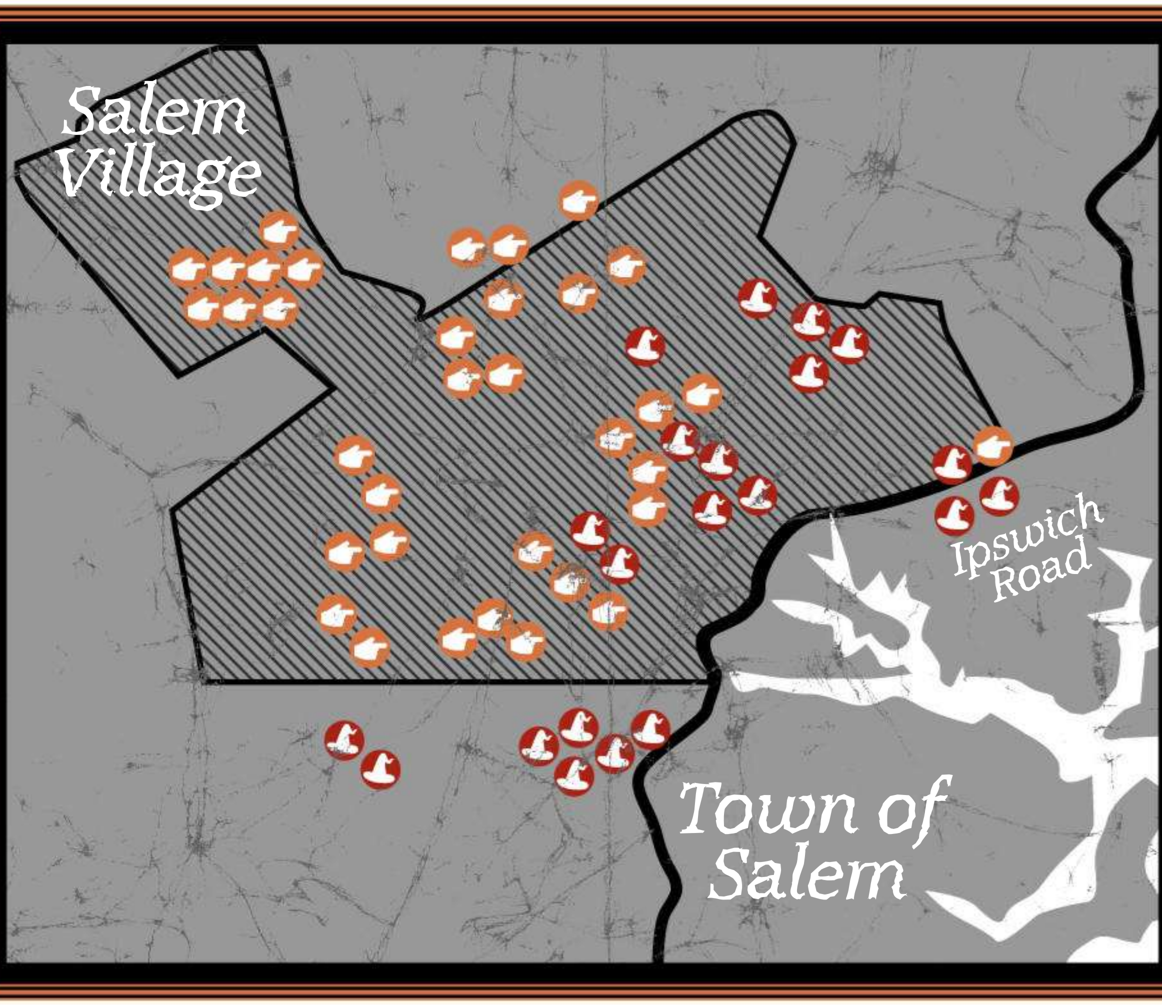
With his reputation and job on the line, Phips wasted no time in establishing a court of Oyer and Terminer – meaning to hear and determine – with nine judges appointed to hear proceedings against the accused. The news must have filled the people of Salem with satisfaction and relief: the troublemakers would now get what they deserved. Far from lessening, however, accusations continued apace and further arrests were made. By the time the court finally convened just over two weeks later on 2 June in Salem Town, there were 62 people held in custody.

Bridget Bishop was the first to come before the judges. Like any prisoner of the time, she was already at a disadvantage: conviction was the outcome more often than not once a case reached trial. But Bridget Bishop had more reason than most to fear this particular court. This was not the first time the three-times-married woman had been accused of witchcraft. Her second husband, Thomas Oliver, had accused her when he was alive, and there was talk by some that she had murdered at least one husband by witchcraft. Although she had once escaped the noose, the evidence given by the girls of Salem against Bridget was damning indeed. She had come to them in ghostly form,



Reverend George Burroughs was accused of witchcraft on the evidence of feats of strength

Image Source ✱ Mary Evans.

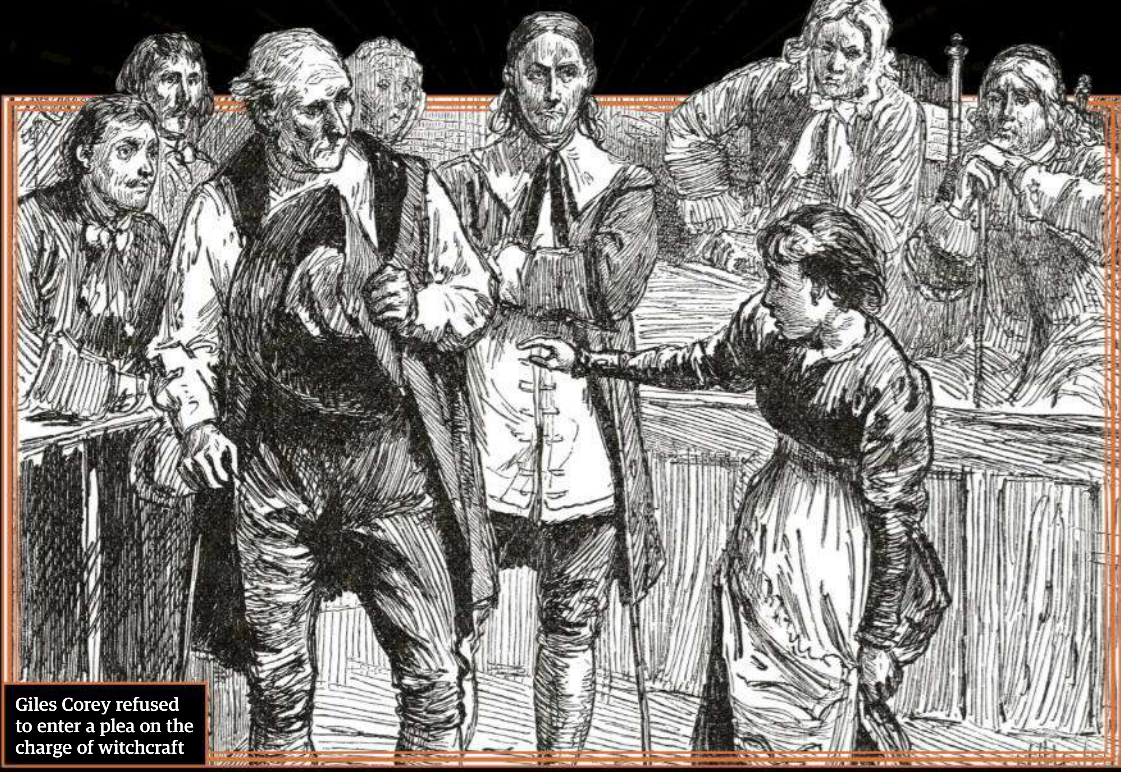


DID RIVALRY BETWEEN OLD AND NEW SET THE STAGE FOR ACCUSATIONS?

At the time of the trials, Salem was divided into Salem Village – populated by farmsteads and families with traditional values – and Salem Town, where a new, entrepreneurial class had been slowly growing for the last two decades. With clear tension between the less well-off traditional farmers on the one hand and the innkeepers, tradesmen, and more market-savvy farmers on the other, it is noteworthy that the first accusations came from the interior of the Village, while the accused were from the outskirts nearest the Town. Were the trials a result of the beleaguered traditionalists striking back against the encroachment of capitalism?

● Accused

● Accusers



Giles Corey refused to enter a plea on the charge of witchcraft

Image Source ✱ Topfoto.

they said, tormenting them physically with pinches and prods, even threatening to drown one of the girls when she would not sign her name in the Devil's book for her.

In front of the packed room, people witnessed with their own eyes Bishop's guilt. If the accused woman so much as glanced at the girls, they fell into fits, wailing and writhing piteously for all to see. If that wasn't enough, someone declared that Bishop's spectral form had torn her coat - and when the coat was examined, there was indeed a tear just as stated. In her defence, Bishop swore she had never seen the girls before in her life and that she was innocent, but to no avail. The indictments against her were upheld and she was found guilty, going to the gallows on 10 June as the Salem witchcraft trials claimed their first victim.

There was a temporary lull in the madness then as the court adjourned to seek advice from the area's most prominent ministers. Cotton Mather, whose name will always be linked with the tragedy of Salem, wrote the collective response. It at first seemed rather measured, urging that "a very critical and exquisite caution" should be taken where evidence was concerned in case the Devil was actually playing tricks and making fools of them all, especially if the person accused was of formerly good reputation. This urge to caution was almost entirely negated, however, by the opening and closing points of the letter. The afflictions suffered by the tormented girls were, the ministers were certain, deplorable and must be stopped at all costs: in their own words they could not "but humbly recommend unto the government the speedy and vigorous prosecution of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the direction given in the laws of God, and then wholesome statutes of the English nation, for the detection of witchcrafts."

With this endorsement, and despite the resignation of Nathaniel Saltonstall from the court in disgust at Bishop's execution, the court reconvened at the end of June. The judges were not slow to continue the work they had started: Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes and the elderly Rebecca Nurse were brought to trial and, declared guilty, hanged just under three weeks later. Six more were found guilty and sentenced to the same fate on 5 August: only one, Elizabeth Proctor, escaped the noose on the 19th - her execution was postponed because she was pregnant. Like those that had gone before them, their bodies were buried between the rocks: excommunicated and cast out from the church that regulated the lives of the whole community, they were denied a proper burial, left in their shallow graves for the birds and the elements unless their grieving families could retrieve them under cover of darkness.

It must have seemed to the people of Salem that they would never be free from the curse set upon them: however vigilantly they tried to root out the Devil's evil, more and more witches

> George Burroughs recited the Lord's Prayer perfectly from the gallows: this was dismissed as a trick of the Devil and he was hanged anyway

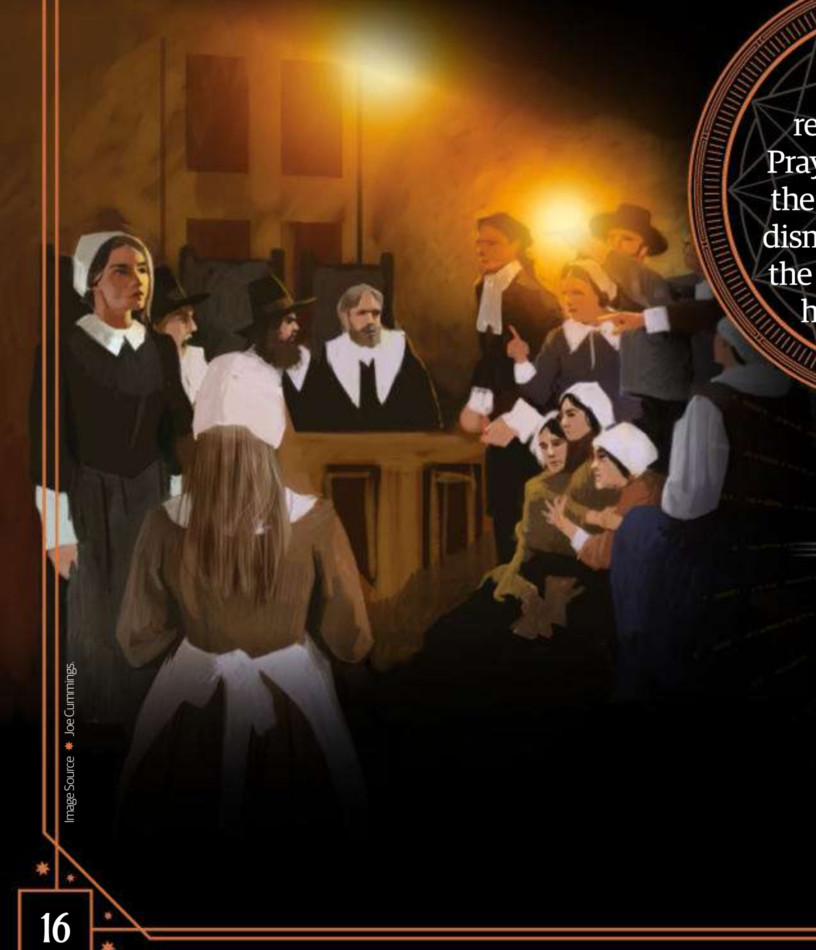
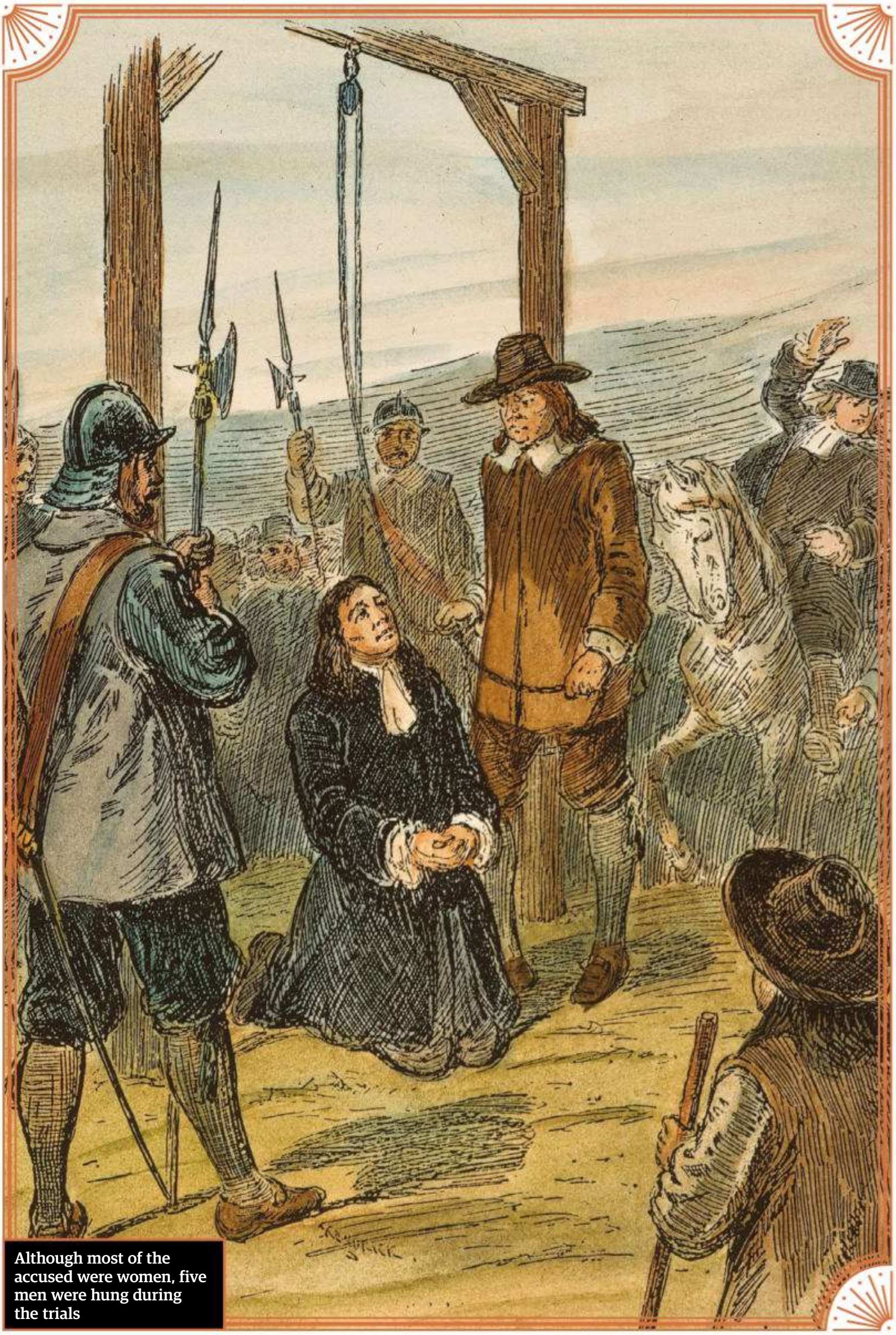


Image Source ✱ Joe Cummings.

TIMELINE

Events moved with startling speed during the Salem trials

- **January - mid-February 1692**
  Cousins Abigail Williams and Betty Parris fall victim to a strange illness. They are diagnosed by a local doctor as being bewitched, and a witch cake is made to confirm this theory.
- **March**
  Accused by the girls, Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba are arrested and questioned before a packed meetinghouse. Tituba confesses to harming the girls under duress by the other two.
- **April**
  More Salem residents are named as doing the Devil's work and arrested as witchcraft fears spread. Reverend George Burroughs, the former minister for Salem, is accused by the girls.



Although most of the accused were women, five men were hung during the trials

Image Source ✱ Topfoto.

SEVEN (EXCEPTIONALLY RELIABLE) TESTS

Spotting a witch could be tricky: luckily, the following tests could help decide if a suspect was innocent or guilty

Spectral evidence

1 Victims of witchcraft often spoke of being tormented by the apparition of the accused witch, even if the actual person was elsewhere at the time. Whether to allow the admission of this form of evidence was hotly debated during the Salem trials.

Witch's touch

2 One of the simplest but most dramatic of tests to witness: the accused party was invited to touch the victim – if the victim then fell into fits and convulsions, then this was proof that the accused was guilty of bewitching them.

Eyewitness account

3 If someone came forward to say they had seen the accused carrying out acts of witchcraft, this could be all the evidence that was needed – especially if the witness was of good reputation and the suspected witch was not.

Lord's Prayer

4 Every good Puritan was expected to be able to say the Lord's Prayer. Getting it wrong when tested was a sure sign that the suspect was guilty and working with the Devil, and fear or sleep deprivation were no excuse for flubbing your words.

Swimming

5 The suspected witch had their thumbs and toes bound together before being lowered into the water. Sinking meant innocence (and the accused being quickly pulled out), but if they floated, they were found guilty and liable to be condemned.

Witch's teats

6 Searching a witch's body could reveal teats from which the witch fed her familiar spirits or the Devil himself. These were often in "hidden" places, such as the armpit, under the breasts or in between the legs.

Witch cake

7 Made of rye mixed with urine, the 'cake' was baked then fed to a dog. If the dog acted strangely, it was proof that the suffering person had been bewitched. This method wasn't used to identify the witch themselves.

May
George Burroughs is arrested and Sarah Osborne dies in prison. The newly arrived Governor William Phips orders a court of Oyer and Terminer to be established to try accusations of witchcraft.

June
The court of Oyer and Terminer convenes for the first time, with Bridget Bishop the first accused of witchcraft to be seen before the judges. Found guilty at trial, she is hanged in a public execution.

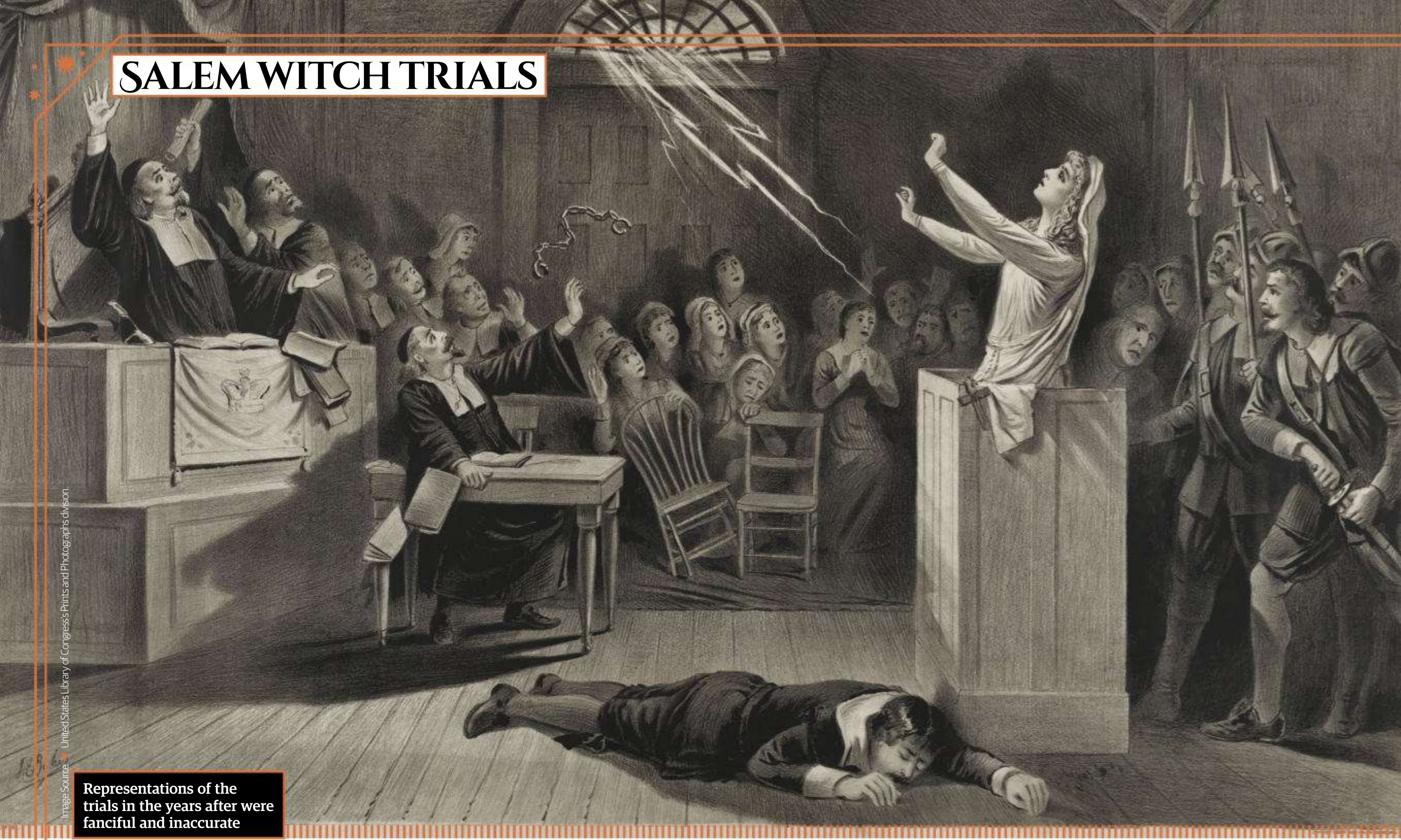
July
Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes and 71-year-old Rebecca Nurse are executed by hanging at Gallows Hill after being tried and found guilty of witchcraft.

August
Six more Salem Village residents are condemned to hang as the young girls continue to suffer. Five die on the gallows, however, Elizabeth Proctor escapes the noose due to pregnancy.

September
More executions take place. Giles Corey is pressed to death after refusing to plea either guilty or innocent. Towards the end of the month, the last executions take place in front of the townsfolk.

January – May 1693
The new Superior Court of Judicature convenes to try those who remain in the prisons. Charges are dismissed or the accused found not guilty in all but five cases, which are pardoned by the governor.

SALEM WITCH TRIALS



Representations of the trials in the years after were fanciful and inaccurate

Image Source ✱ United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division.

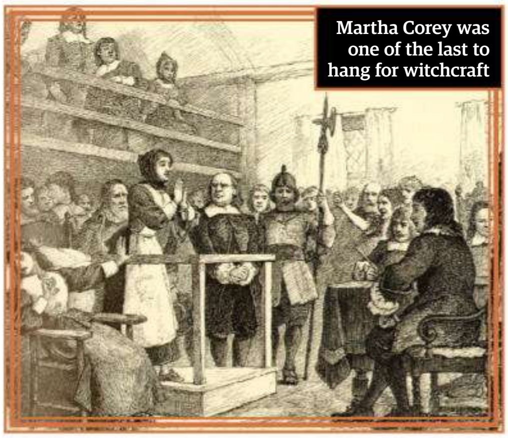
THE TRIALS IN NUMBERS

19 people were hanged in total at Salem **14 women & 5 men**

54 people confessed to witchcraft during the Salem trials

12 people had been convicted and executed for witchcraft in New England before 1692

132 of the accused were women



Martha Corey was one of the last to hang for witchcraft

Image Source ✱ John W. Ehninger.

were uncovered to take their places. Things were no better as September came round. 18 more witches were indicted with nine found guilty and sentenced to hang on the 17th of that month. One of those tried, however, 81-year-old Giles Corey, refused to plead either guilty or not guilty to the charges brought against him. He had been accused by the girls back in April, and had languished in prison ever since, awaiting trial. Although many came forward to give evidence against him, no words could convince the man to submit a plea either way. By law he was therefore sentenced to death by the process of peine forte et dure - hard punishment - where the condemned endured heavy stones placed upon his chest until they finally crushed him. Corey remained steadfast in his refusal to speak and died two days later without confessing to guilt.

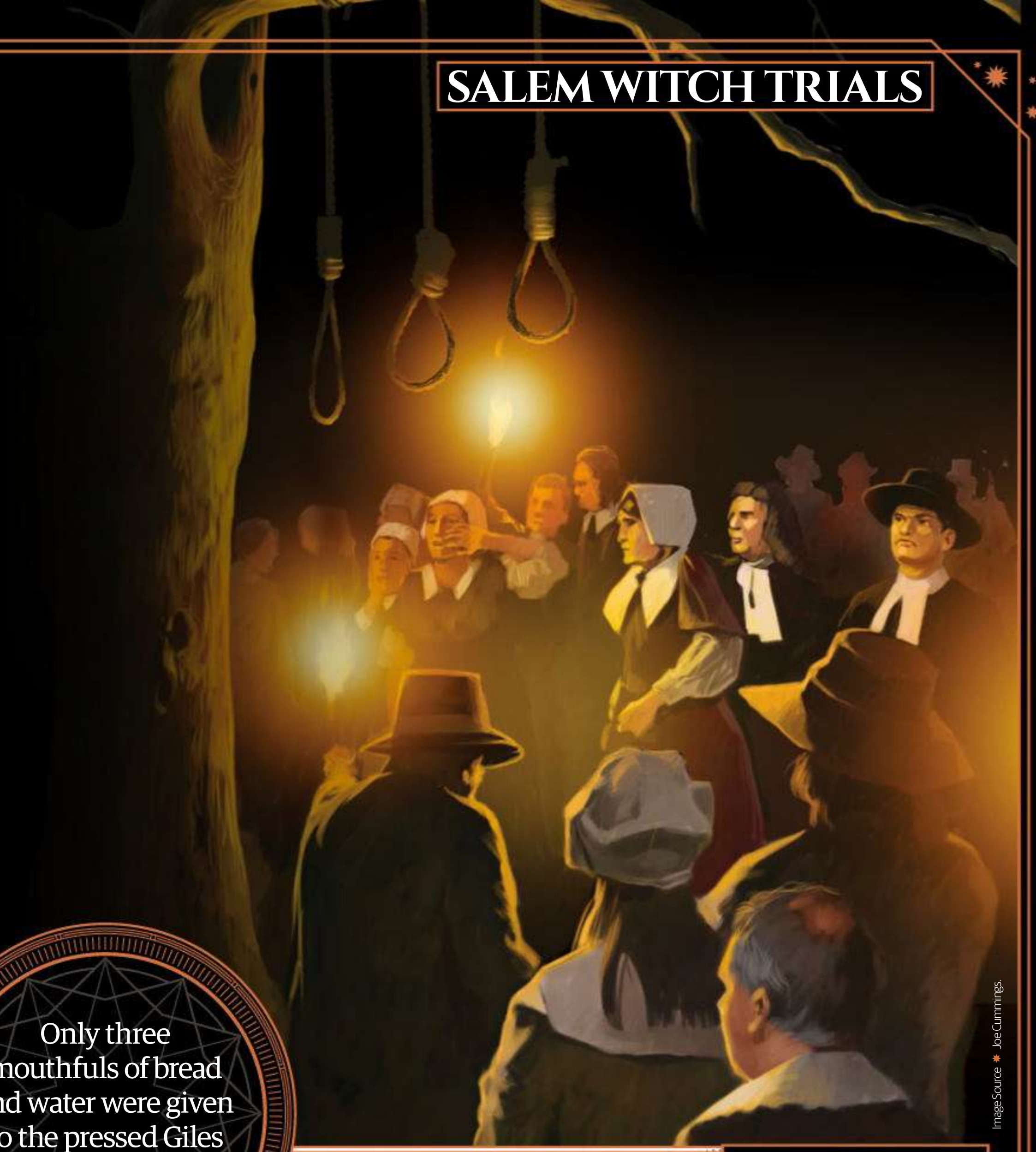


Image Source ✱ Joe Cummings.

It was thus that the people of Salem gathered on 22 September to witness what would be the final executions in this sorry tale. Although too late to save the eight final victims, as October came around, dissenting voices began to grow louder. Among those speaking out against the trials, Reverend Increase Mather argued against the acceptance of spectral evidence, so popular in the Salem trials, in court. Governor Phips, perhaps in part swayed by the fact that his own wife, Lady Mary Phips, had recently been accused, reconsidered matters and in October sent his recommendations to London that the trials be stopped. While he waited for a reply, further arrests were ceased, and the court of Oyer and Terminer that had sentenced so many to death was dissolved.

A new court was convened in January of 1693, with William Stoughton, a man who had been instrumental in the earlier condemnations, at the helm. The task of the new court was clear: to pardon and release as many of those left in the prisons as possible. Out of the cases that followed, most were found innocent. Three were not so lucky; they were found guilty and sentenced to follow their predecessors. Fate intervened in the form of Governor Phips: his distaste for the whole matter evident now, he overrode a furious Stoughton, pardoning not only the three condemned but also acquitting all those who still remained in the prisons. And so it was over. The Salem witchcraft madness was spent.

Only three mouthfuls of bread and water were given to the pressed Giles Corey in the two days it took him to die

Tituba, the slave who had been there from the start, was one of the last to be released. Imprisoned for more than a year, she was no doubt in a sorry state indeed when she finally saw the light of day again. Her ultimate fate is unknown: her old owner, Reverend Parris, refused to pay her prison costs and she was sold to someone who would foot the bill.

Slowly, painfully slowly, the shattered Salem community tried to make sense of what had happened and rebuild itself. Of those involved, some proved remorseful, while others maintained that only justice had been carried out. In January 1697, a fast day was held: the apology of Samuel Sewell was read aloud, and a dozen others who had sat on the jury pleaded for forgiveness. Petitions were made across the decades that followed for all who had been executed to be pardoned, but it was not until 2001, more than 300 years since the events took place, that all were at long last proclaimed innocent. Whether or not they rest in peace can never be known with certainty: can the lingering spectre of Salem ever be fully exorcised?

Hangings are treated casually in Salem in this depiction from *Pictorial History of the United States*, published 1845

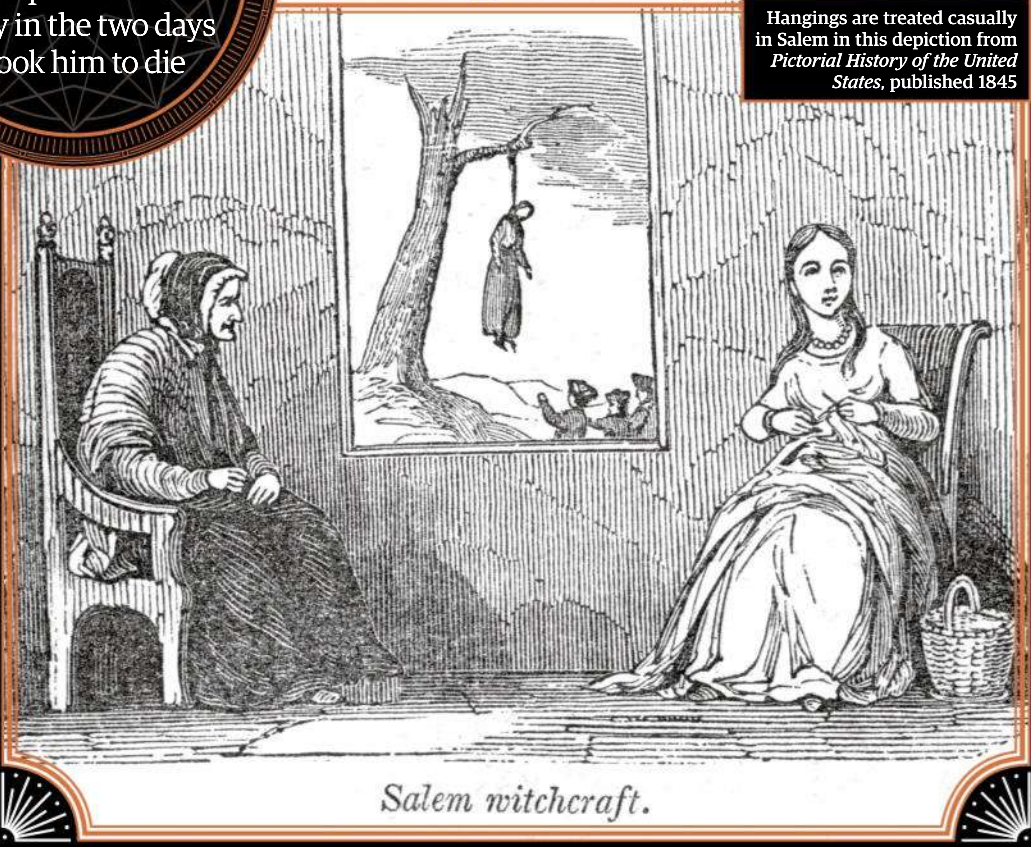

Salem witchcraft.

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Puritans

When the Anglican Church split from Rome, a particular sect wanted to create their own society

22 **THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION**
How Protestantism evolved

24 **ENGLAND'S REFORMATION**
The origins of the Puritans

30 **ROBERT BROWNE**
The Father of the Puritan Pilgrims

32 **CHURCH, STATE & WITCHCRAFT**
The influence of an obsessed king

40 **PILGRIMS & WAYFARERS**
Separating from the rest of the world

46 **ENGLAND & HOLLAND**
The Puritans' first ventures abroad

32

24

40

30

The Protestant

How a single act of defiance sparked a wildfire of destruction and religious reform that swept through Europe and changed the world forever

MARTIN LUTHER'S DEFIANCE

1517

Luther posts his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg in protest at some of the Church's practices, including the sale of indulgences as a means of raising money.

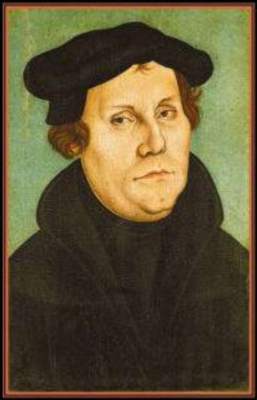


Image Source ✱ Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder

A COLLISION COURSE WITH ROME

1520

Luther publishes and circulates a damning pamphlet in which he discusses the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, as well as openly criticising both the Church and the Pope.

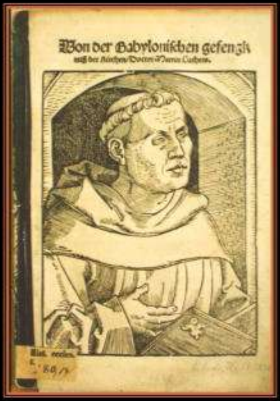


Image Source ✱ Userims.

JOHN CALVIN

1536

John Calvin publishes his version of reform, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The Catholic Church is now under attack from different factions of reformers with very differing views.

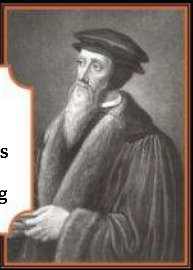


Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Author Unkown.

After being tied to a stake, Tyndale was strangled before being burned

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

1536

Took **4 YEARS** to complete

A total of about **376** monasteries

For all monasteries with a revenue of less than **£200** per year

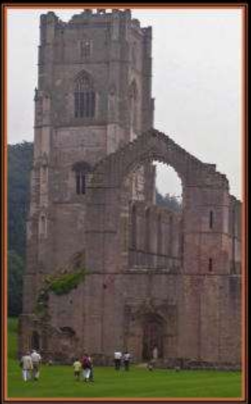


Image Source ✱ Johnteslade.

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

1535-6

Thomas More refuses to accept Henry as Head of the Church and is executed. William Tyndale is found guilty of heresy for his Bible translation and burned at the stake.

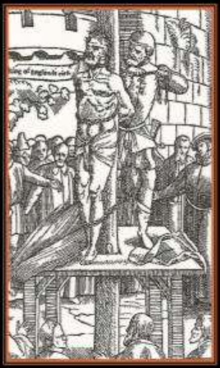


Image Source ✱ John Foxe.

THE ACT OF SUPREMACY

1534

Henry VIII instructs Thomas Cromwell to push through an act to make him Head of the Church in England. All ties with Rome are broken.

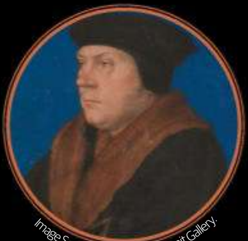


Image Source ✱ National Portrait Gallery.

THE PEACE OF AUGSBURG

1555

This treaty ends conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the Schmalkaldic League of Lutheran Princes. Lutheranism is to be tolerated and on track to becoming properly recognised in Europe.

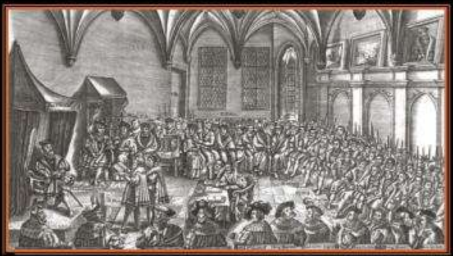


Image Source ✱ Descriptive and Revisionary Democracy.

PROTESTANTISM COMES TO SCOTLAND

1559

John Knox, a staunch follower of Calvin, is central to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. England returns to Protestantism under Elizabeth I following Mary I's Catholic reign.

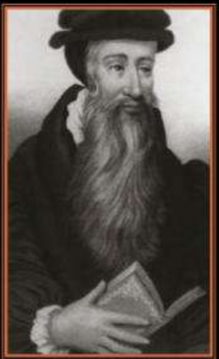


Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Author Unknown.

FRANCE AT WAR WITH ITSELF

1562-1598

The French Religious Wars are actually individual conflicts **EIGHT**

As many as **4,000** Huguenots are executed at one time

By the time the Edict of Nantes ends the conflict nearly **4 MILLION** are dead

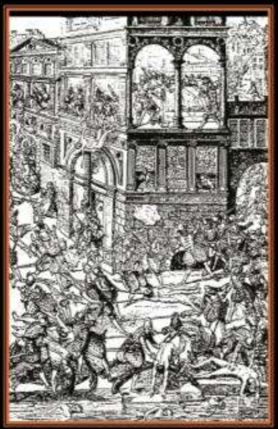


Image Source ✱ Nordisk familjebok.

reformation

THE DIET OF WORMS

Summoned to answer questions before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Luther's actions are deemed unacceptable and he is condemned as a heretic. He is excommunicated by the Pope.

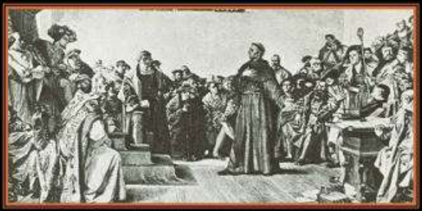


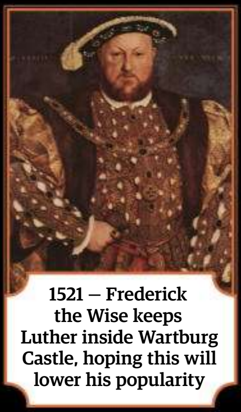
Image Source ✸ Public Domain; Author Unknown.

1521

HENRY VIII ATTACKS LUTHER

In answer to Luther's attack on the Church, English King Henry VIII writes his own pamphlet *Septem Sacramentorum*, defending the Catholic Church. A grateful Pope gives Henry the title 'Defender of the Faith'.

1521



1521 – Frederick the Wise keeps Luther inside Wartburg Castle, hoping this will lower his popularity

Image Source ✸ Hans Holbein.

A QUESTION OF NUMBERS

Martin Luther challenges the **7** sacraments of the Church

Calvin sets out **5** principles of theology

Image Source ✸ Thomas Jenner.

The Augsburg Confession consists of **28 ARTICLES** of Lutheran doctrine presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V

1517-1536

HENRY EXCOMMUNICATED

Following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII begins his own path of action in direct conflict with the Pope. Despite being called a 'Defender of the Faith', he is excommunicated by the Pope.

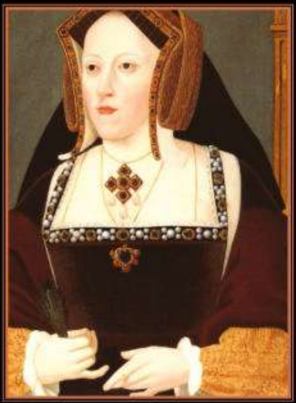


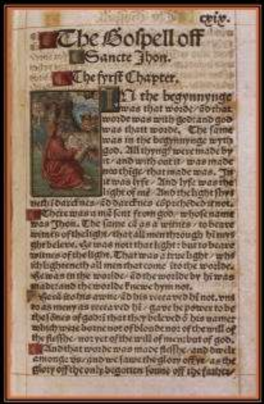
Image Source ✸ Joannes Corvus.

1533

TYNDALE'S BIBLE PUBLISHED

In direct conflict with the Catholic Church's practice of services in Latin, William Tyndale publishes the first English translation. Those able to read can now question the wording and the Church's authority.

1529 – Luther and Zwingli meet to try and unify Protestants, but cannot agree their differences



cxiv.

The Goſpell off
Sancte Jhon.
The fyrſt Chapter.
IN the begynnynge

Image Source ✸ Peter Schöffer & William Tyndale.

1526

ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT IS BORN

Inspired by Luther's dissent, the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli forms the Anabaptists, denouncing the doctrine of baptism in children and advocating for adult baptisms when they are old enough to confess their sins.

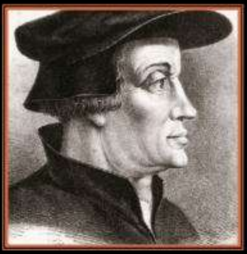


Image Source ✸ Georg Osterwald.

1525

THE EDICT OF NANTES

Following the persecution of the Protestant Huguenots, King Henry IV of France grants them religious toleration. It brings civil order but is revoked by Henry's grandson, Louis, in 1685.

1560 - The Geneva Bible is the first to be mechanically printed and mass-produced

Image Source ✸ Hogenberg end of 16th century.

1598

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

The war actually lasts **29 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS & 1 DAY**

Between **25-40%** of the German population are killed

The Holy Roman Empire consists of approximately **1,000** semi-autonomous states

Image Source ✸ Ziegelbrenner.

1618-1648

THIRTY YEARS' WAR ENDS

The Treaty of Westphalia ends a destructive conflict between Catholics and Protestants from across Europe – mainly in Germany. It changes the European map and religious tolerance forever.

Image Source ✸ Museo del Prado.

1648

England's Reformation

How doctrinal arguments in the fractious English church led to the creation of separatist groups with their own unique religious ideas

Written by Derek Wilson

At the Battle of Bosworth Field on 22 August 1485 Henry Tudor, a Welsh upstart distantly related to the Lancastrian king Henry VI, defeated and killed the Yorkist occupant of the throne. No one had any reason to believe this was the last clash in what a later age called The Wars of the Roses. Indeed, the new king, Henry VII, spent much of his reign fighting off challenges from rival claimants. For the next century, his son and grandchildren would be haunted by the spectre of a premature end to their dynasty. There was a fundamental insecurity felt, at the very least, by those who had a stake in the political life of the nation. But there were other eerie forces at work.

The strongest of those was the communications revolution. Today we are very aware of the social changes wrought by computer technology. Around the time of the Battle of Bosworth the invention of the movable-type printing press made possible the mass production of books, which hitherto had been laboriously hand-written. There were at least five major aspects of the revolution to which this led: the rapid spread of information and ideas, the growing demand for education, the development of vernacular languages (before this almost all books had been in Latin, the lingua franca of scholars), the closing of the gap between clergy and laity, and the focus of religious life on the written word rather than the painted, carved or sculpted image.

> The English Reformation set the stage for a new age of religious intolerance that eventually fuelled the Salem trials

Traditional religious observance for most lay people in the 15th century centred on the sacraments and particularly attendance at mass. This re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice was performed by the officiating priest on behalf of the congregation, whose involvement was largely passive. Since the liturgy was in Latin it is unlikely that most parishioners actually understood the subtleties of Christian doctrine. They very rarely heard sermons and most clergy were, in fact, ill-equipped to deliver them. This is not to say that Englishmen as a whole were indifferent to spiritual commitment. They attended confession. They belonged to guilds responsible for the maintenance of altars and chapels. They paid for masses to be said for the repose of their souls and those of their loved ones. If their imagination was stirred it was largely by material objects. Worshippers venerated crucifixes as well as statues of the Virgin Mary and other saints. They made pilgrimages to shrines where holy relics were housed, such as saints' bones,

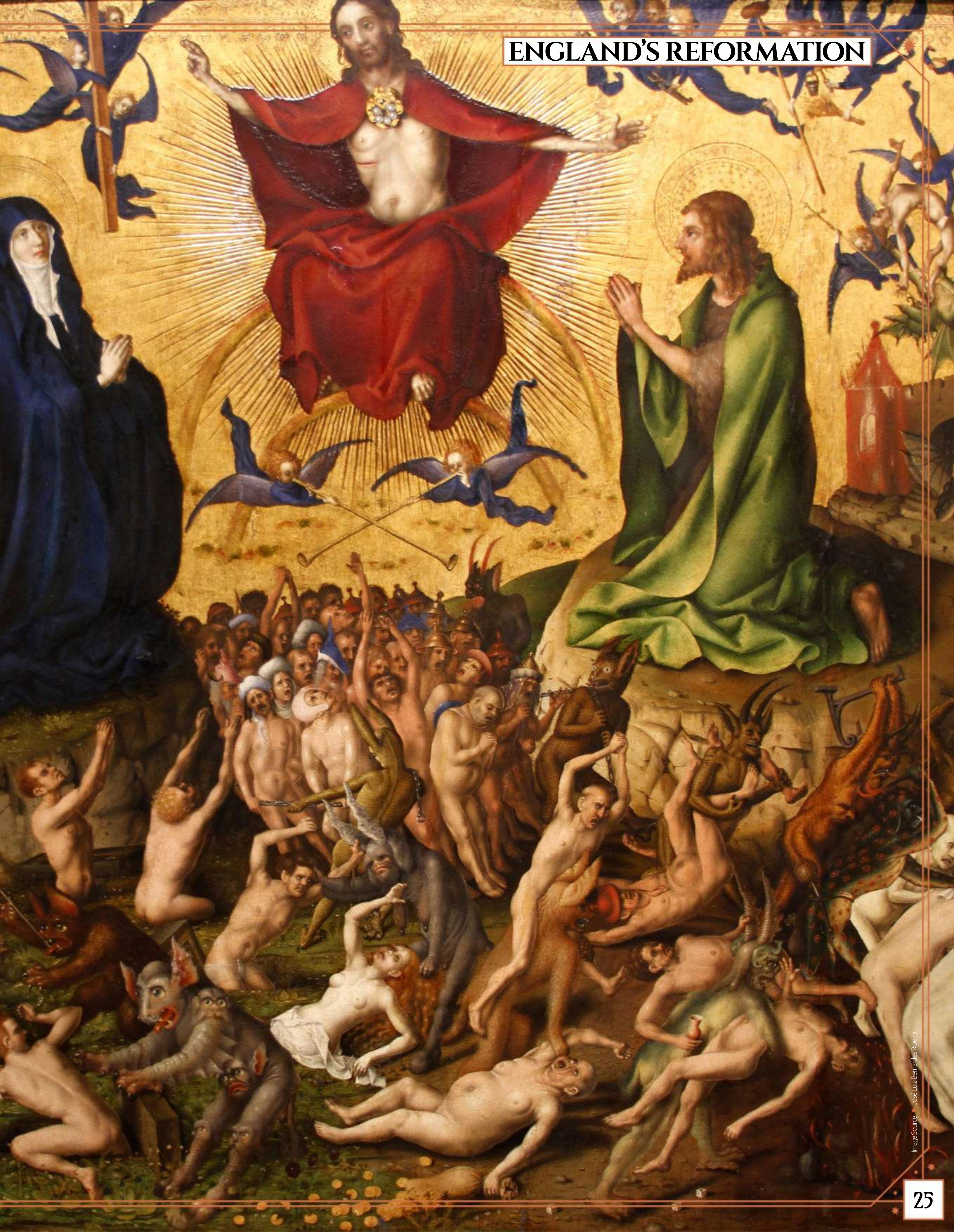
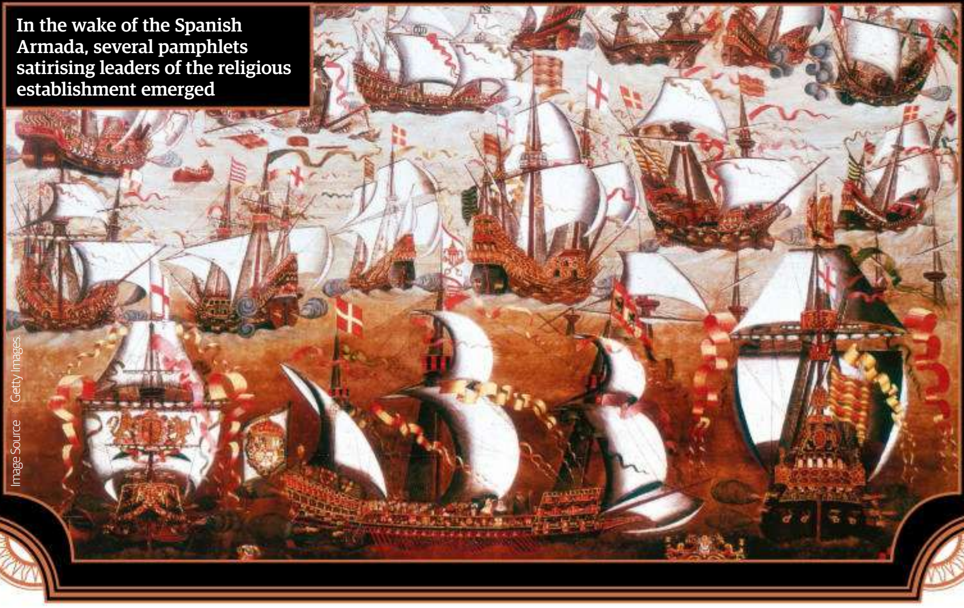


Image Source ✶ José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro.

THE MARPRELATE TRACTS

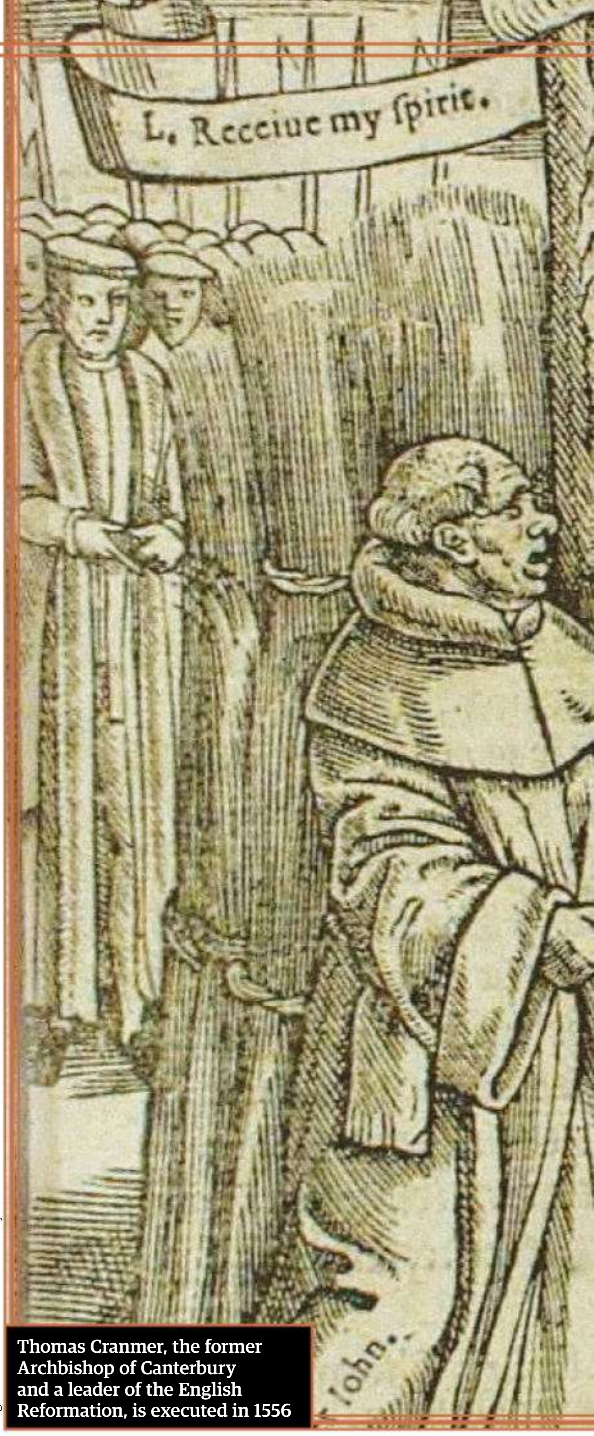
In the aftermath of the Spanish Armada's defeat, the religious debate turned nasty

In the autumn of 1588 the ragged remnants of Philip II's Spanish invasion fleet were making their way home from their English defeat, via the waters off Scotland and Ireland. The English were ecstatic at this victory over the forces of militant Roman Catholicism. Cashing in on this euphoria was an anonymous pamphlet which now appeared on the bookstalls – *An Epistle to the Terrible Priests of the Convocation House*. The anonymous author wrote under the name 'Martin Marprelate' and he laid into the bishops with biting satire. The publishers worked from a press in Essex, their objective to undermine the leaders of the religious establishment, 'that swinish rabble of petty antichrists, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable withstanders of reformation and enemies of the gospel'. The government tried to sniff out the ringleaders and employed popular playwrights to respond in kind. But Marprelate's co-conspirators moved to the Midlands and transported the press from place to place. As for the ripostes, they only kept the controversy in the public eye. Seven *Marprelate Tracts* were published over the next few months before the press was shut down and not until 1593 were three of the main offenders (not including Marprelate) hanged. The *Marprelate Tracts* widened the breach between the official English Church and the Presbyterian 'church within a church'. Many Puritan leaders distanced themselves from the pamphleteers but the stigma of sedition stuck and many radicals felt their only course was to leave the country.



In the wake of the Spanish Armada, several pamphlets satirising leaders of the religious establishment emerged

Image Source Getty Images



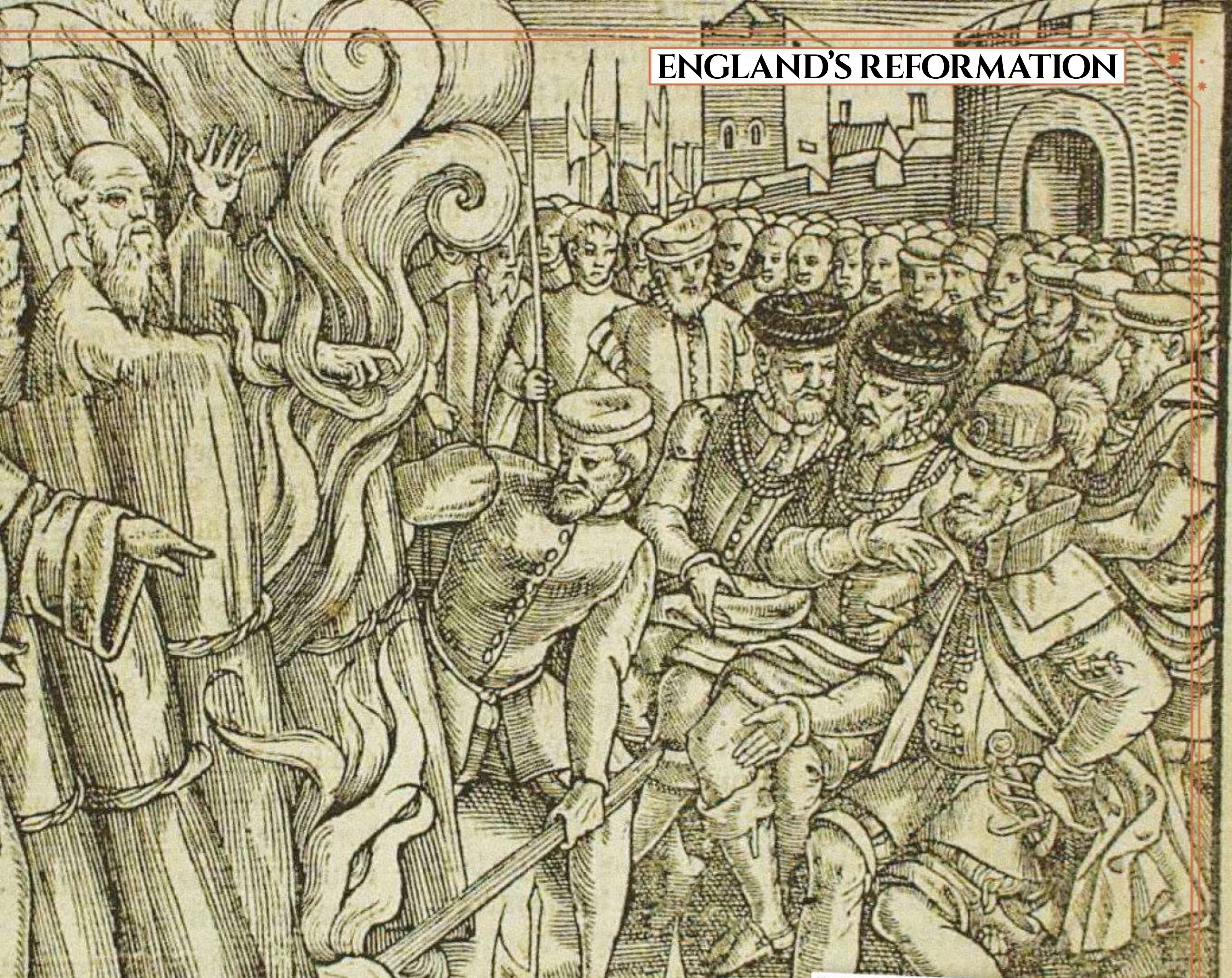
Thomas Cranmer, the former Archbishop of Canterbury and a leader of the English Reformation, is executed in 1556

Image Source ✱ John Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

fragments of the true cross and other personal items related to Christ or other holy figures. They sought the intercessions of saints when they were sick or in any other adversity. But probably the objects that impacted most strongly and frequently on worshippers were the painted images with which church walls were crowded. Biblical scenes were mingled with illustrations of incidents from Church history and others whose only origin was popular legend. However, the most compelling image in most buildings and the one displayed most prominently was the 'doom', a representation of Christ the Judge, receiving some souls into heaven and dispatching others to Hell. It would be no exaggeration to say that it was concern for their ultimate destiny that kept most people obedient to the Church. Even so, there is clear evidence of anticlericalism and heresy. Scepticism and downright hostility extended from alehouse mockery to popular literature such as *Ship of Fools* by the German Sebastian Brant, a best-selling satire translated into English in 1509. Even many bishops were angry with the poor quality of the clergy, many of whom were ill-educated, incompetent and, in some cases, immoral. But none of this struck at the doctrinal roots of the Church.

The people who did that were the Lollards. The name, of Dutch origin, was used to describe people of varied unorthodox views who 'mumbled' or 'lolled' their opinions. They gathered in small, scattered communities, mostly in southern England. They had two major beliefs in common. One was a rejection of transubstantiation – the philosophical basis of the mass which claimed that, by the act of consecration, a priest actually changed bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ. By claiming that the sacramental elements were merely symbolising Christ's presence Lollards struck at the 'magical' power that separated priests from ordinary mortals. The other was their commitment to the English Bible. Back in 1408, English Church leaders had banned unauthorised translation of the Latin Vulgate into English because they feared the spread of the 'heresies' of John Wycliffe, a 14th-century Oxford don who had challenged aspects of Catholic teaching, claiming biblical support, and had set in hand an English version of the Vulgate. Over the next century, members of his sect had completed his work and these Lollards, in their secret meetings, studied the Bible together, convinced its authority outranked that of the Pope. The Lollards were a small minority who, for the most part, kept a low profile. From time to time, the bishops launched campaigns against them, but without much effect.

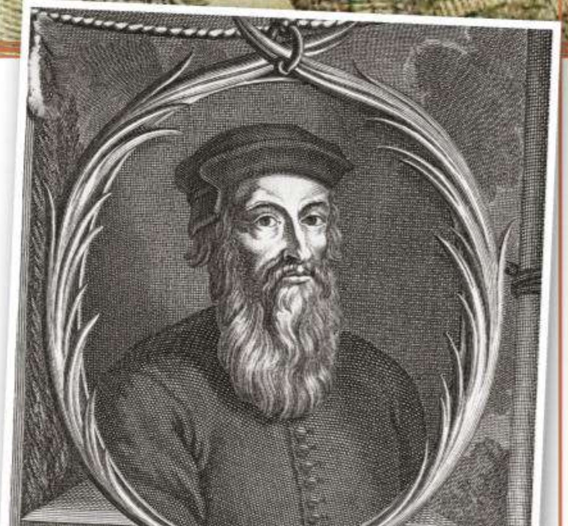
Most Lollards came from the humbler strands of society – artisans and semi-educated tradespeople. By the early-16th century their unconventional thinking was running parallel with the Renaissance humanism embraced by many of the intellectual



elite. Basic to the new approach was a reappraisal of classical authors and a challenge to 'scholasticism', the educational methodology of the medieval Church. In terms of the wider religious life of Europe, there were two developments causing fundamental rethinking. One was a revived interest in ancient Greek. This sent scholars back to early New Testament documents (some recently discovered) and suggested that the Latin Vulgate, basic to all Church teaching, was capable of being re-interpreted. The other development, as the term 'humanism' suggests, was a new emphasis on humanity – life in the here and now, as opposed to life in the hereafter.

All these subtle changes were straining the fabric of medieval religious life. Therefore, when in 1516, the German monk Martin Luther made a frontal assault on basic Catholic doctrine, parts of the structure collapsed with remarkable rapidity. Luther suggested the Greek biblical word rendered by the Vulgate as 'do penance', should really be translated as 'repent'. This and other challenges gave power to the individual to determine their relationship with God and undercut the power of a mediating priesthood. Ten years later an Oxford scholar, William Tyndale, defied the authorities by publishing an English New Testament. This rapidly became the most explosive book in the nation's history – partly because of its Lutheran glosses. Though banned, it was widely read, and though some people were burned at the stake for possessing it, nothing stopped its spread or its influence. The English Reformation was well and truly under way.

Nothing would have stopped it, but political action by King Henry VIII strengthened its impact. At the same time that Tyndale's book began circulating, Henry fell out with the Pope. Determined to end his marriage to his queen, he looked to Rome for an annulment. But, for



John Wycliffe, the English religious reformer

Image Source ✱ Getty Images

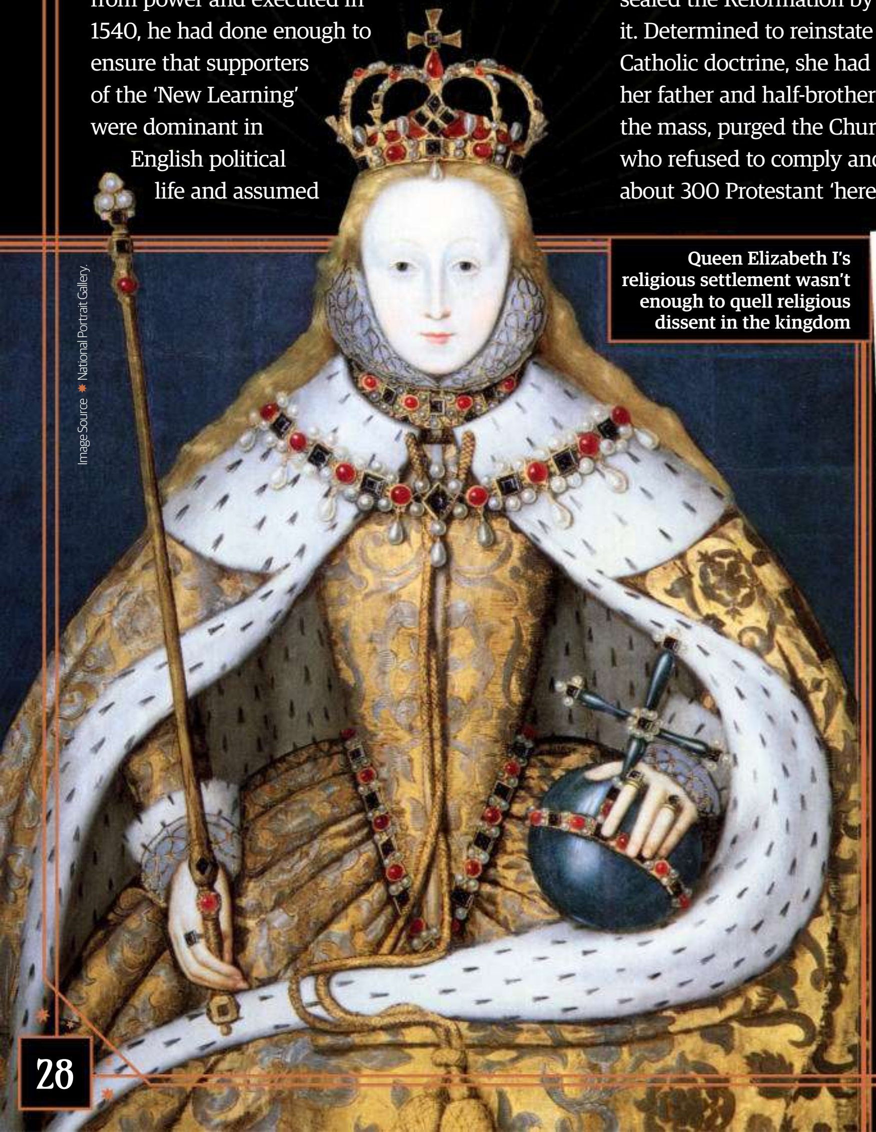
“Unfortunately, the new monarch, Elizabeth I, did not share their vision. She inherited a kingdom divided on matters of religion”

various reasons, the Pope was unable to gratify his request. After years of mounting acrimony, Parliament passed an Act of Supremacy in 1534. This established the King and not the Pope as the spiritual head of the English Church, which in effect became a state department. To strengthen his position and minimise the threat of Catholic backlash, Henry had to win the support of radicals and employ some of them in the government's propaganda campaign of preaching and writing. His principal agent in achieving this and the man put in charge of religious policy was Thomas Cromwell, someone who, as historians are now recognising, was a convinced Protestant (though the word would not be used in England during Henry's reign). Cromwell oversaw the dismantling of English monasticism and established close links with Protestant states abroad. Though a reactionary court coup had Cromwell removed from power and executed in 1540, he had done enough to ensure that supporters of the 'New Learning' were dominant in English political life and assumed control when the nine-year-old Edward VI became England's short-lived king in 1547.

The brief years of Edward's reign (1547-1553) were those in which the Reformation was irrevocably established. The Church, led by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, abolished the mass and other Latin rites in favour of an English Prayer Book (1549, revised 1552). Use of the new book was made mandatory by the Act of Uniformity (1549). Foreign scholars were brought over from the continent to teach in the universities and to undergird the doctrine of the English Church with theology developed in such European centres as Geneva and Zurich. The ties between English radicals and their Swiss and German counterparts were to prove extremely important in the years that followed.

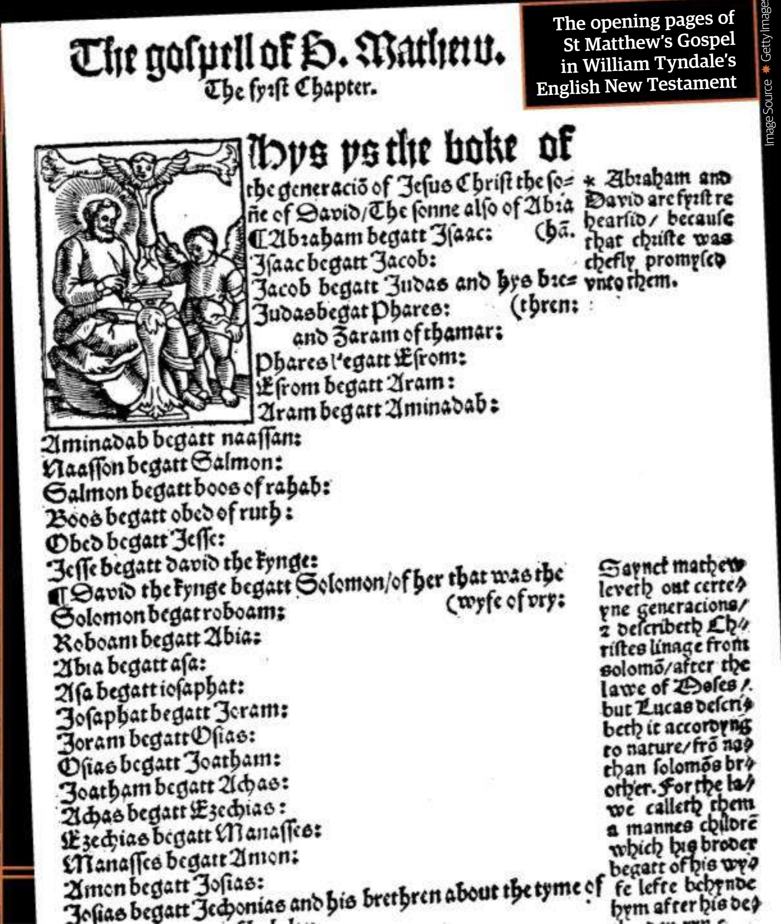
The adolescent King Edward died unmarried and without a direct heir, and was replaced by Henry VIII's elder daughter, Mary. She inadvertently sealed the Reformation by attempting to eradicate it. Determined to reinstate papal authority and Catholic doctrine, she had the religious statutes of her father and half-brother annulled, re-established the mass, purged the Church of bishops and clergy who refused to comply and sent to the stake about 300 Protestant 'heretics'. Although most of her subjects accepted this reversal, a substantial minority did not. Most of these dissidents nursed their real beliefs in secret, but several hundred fled across the Channel and found havens in Geneva, Zurich and other reform centres. This was absolutely crucial to the future of the English Church. In their foreign refuges they adopted the teachings of Protestant leaders such as Jean Calvin in Geneva and Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. When Mary also died childless after a short reign in 1558, the exiles returned, fired up by what they had seen in the well-established Protestant states abroad and encouraged by the blood of the martyrs to set up in their own country the utopian ideal of a perfect Christian commonwealth.

Unfortunately, the new monarch, Elizabeth I, did not share their vision. She inherited a kingdom divided on matters of religion. At one extreme were Catholics who longed for another change of regime which would restore the old faith. Some were recusants – people who refused to attend Protestant services. They welcomed Catholic priests, smuggled into the country from France and the Low Countries, who celebrated mass for them in secret gatherings. Some plotted the overthrow of the regime, particularly after Pius V issued a papal bull in 1570 which absolved all Catholics from allegiance to the queen. At the other end of the spectrum were the Puritans. They were Protestants holding various doctrinal positions but who looked mainly to an extreme form of Calvinism for their image of the true Church. Several of the returning exiles obtained positions in the restored Protestant



Queen Elizabeth I's religious settlement wasn't enough to quell religious dissent in the kingdom

Image Source ✱ National Portrait Gallery.



The gospell of S. Mathew.
The fyrſt Chapter.

Hys ys the boke of
the generació of Jeſus Chriſt the ſo=
ñe of David/The ſonne alſo of Abra
Abraham begatt Iſaac: (hā.
Iſaac begatt Jacob:
Jacob begatt Judas and hys bre=
Judas begat Phares: (thren:
and Zaram of thamar:
Phares begatt Eſrom:
Eſrom begatt Aram:
Aram begatt Aminadab:
Aminadab begatt naaſſan:
Naaſſon begatt Salmon:
Salmon begatt boos of rahab:
Boos begatt obed of ruth:
Obed begatt Jeſſe:
Jeſſe begatt david the kynge:
David the kynge begatt Solomon/of her that was the
(wyfe of vry:
Solomon begat roboam:
Roboam begatt Abia:
Abia begatt aſa:
Aſa begatt ioſaphat:
Joſaphat begatt Joram:
Joram begatt Oſias:
Oſias begatt Joatham:
Joatham begatt Achas:
Achas begatt Ezechias:
Ezechias begatt Manaſſes:
Manaſſes begatt Amon:
Amon begatt Joſias:
Joſias begatt Jechonias and his brethren about the tyme of

* Abraham and
David are fyrſt re
hearſid/ becauſe
that chriſte was
chefly promyſed
vnto them.

Saynct mathew
leveth out certe=
yne generacions/
and deſcribeth Ch=
riſtes linage from
solomō/after the
lawe of Moſes/.
but Lucas deſcri=
beth it accordyng
to nature/frō na=
than ſolomōs br=
other. For the la=
we calleth them
a mannes childrē
which his broder
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fe lefte behynde
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The opening pages of St Matthew's Gospel in William Tyndale's English New Testament

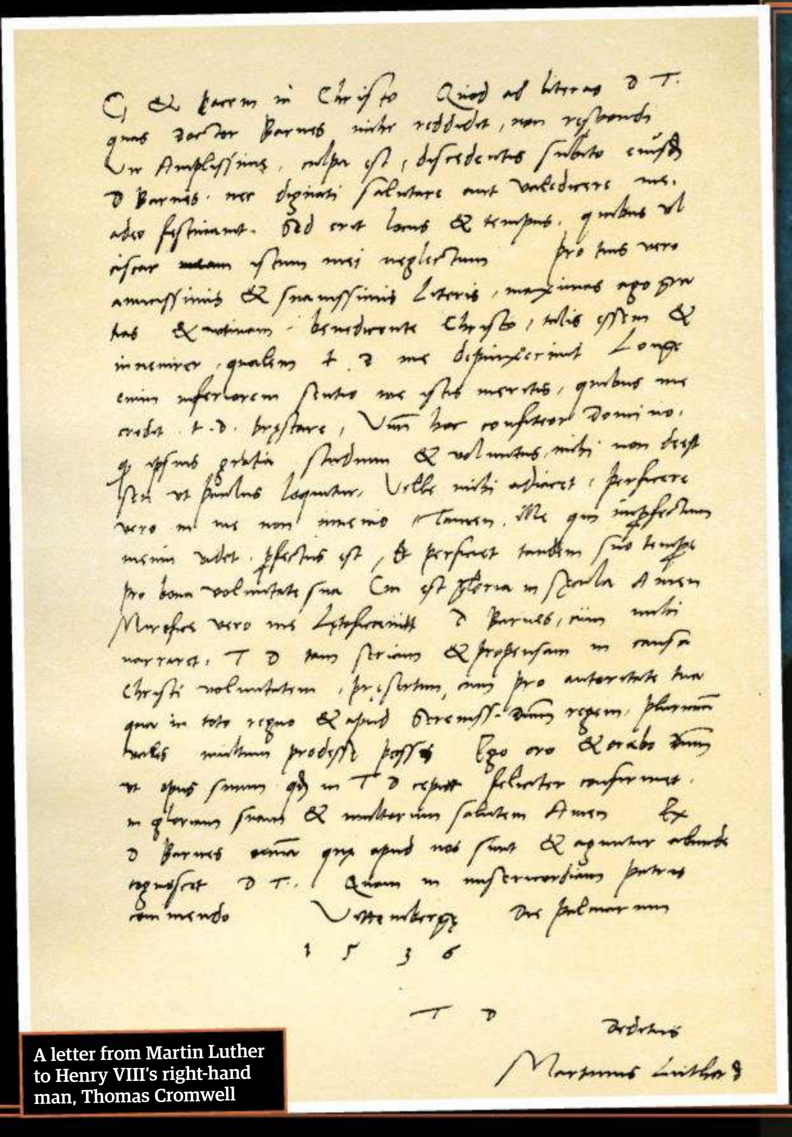
Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Church. They were determined to work within that Church, completing, as they saw it, the purifying work of Reformation.

Elizabeth loathed all the extremists. She was of a moderate Protestant persuasion and liked a measure of ornamentation in church (which the Puritans condemned as papist). She had a new Act of Uniformity passed, which restored the 1552 Prayer Book, with minor alterations (which the Catholics considered to be heretical). The queen's instinct was to exercise as much tolerance as possible, desiring only loyalty and outward conformity from her subjects. The more extreme Puritans regarded this as sinful compromise with the truth as laid down in Scripture. Some ministers refused to wear vestments. Some wanted to abolish the office of bishop and establish a 'presbyterian' form of government such as existed in Geneva and which, as they believed, followed the pattern laid down in the New Testament. Yet what in Elizabeth's eyes was worse was the attitude of some Puritan spokesmen to her royal person. In Geneva the civic rulers were accustomed to being guided and held to account by the ministers. Some returned exiles did not refrain from telling Elizabeth to her face how she ought to behave. In 1576, after such a lecture, she suspended the Archbishop of Canterbury from office.

The tensions between the Puritans and the supporters of the established Church became worse with the passing of the years. In 1588-89 a series of pamphlets, the *Marprelate Tracts*, were published, denouncing the alleged failings of the bishops. Other radicals did what dissidents (Catholics and heretics) had done before them; they separated from the established Church and began worshipping in independent groups. By the last years of the century the radical fringe of English Protestantism had become very frayed. Dissatisfaction with the status quo produced a sub-culture of seekers looking for they knew not what. They readily coalesced into small groups, usually around some charismatic preacher who claimed to have found the secret of the perfect church. Thus were born the first of the English Independents, or Congregationalists.

Before the end of Elizabeth's reign these extremists had their first martyrs. Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood established in London their congregation, which called itself the Brothers of the Separation. A fundamental tenet of their doctrine was that, unlike the national Church, in which, as the Prayer Book stated 'the bad be ever mingled with the good', God's people were easily identifiable and distinctive. They could not be tainted by association with Christians who were not perfect. The government had no desire to persecute such eccentrics but Barrowe and Greenwood drew attention to themselves by writing pamphlets denouncing the establishment. They spent spells in prison and, in 1598, were charged with the capital crime of publishing seditious books. They were found guilty and duly sentenced. They were given every opportunity to admit their error but they refused and gained what they regarded as a martyr's death. It is against this background that we need to understand the determination of some Separatists to leave their own land.



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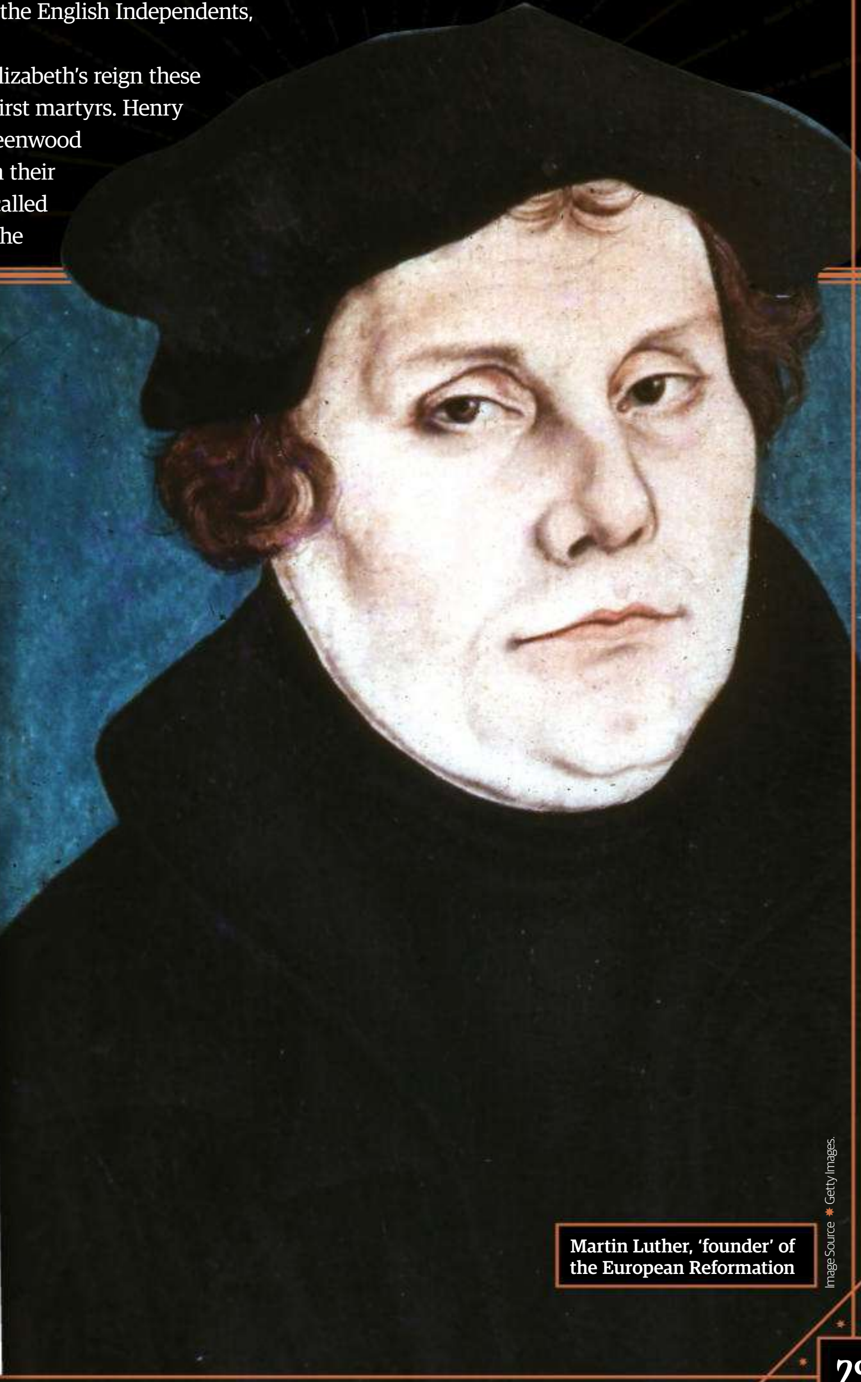
Martinus Luther

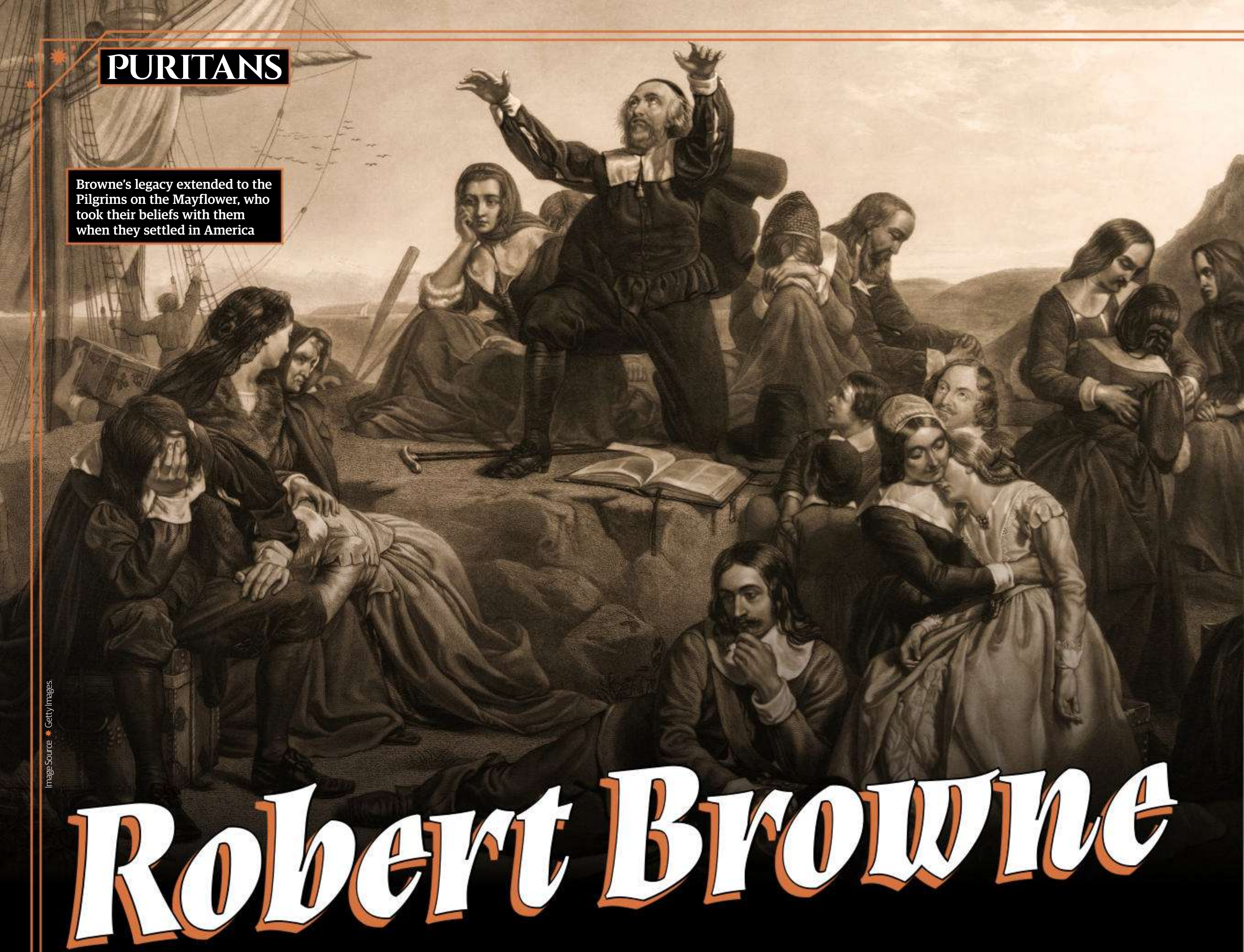
A letter from Martin Luther to Henry VIII's right-hand man, Thomas Cromwell



Martin Luther, 'founder' of the European Reformation

Image Source * Getty Images.

Image Source * Getty Images.



Browne's legacy extended to the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, who took their beliefs with them when they settled in America

Image Source ✱ Getty Images

Robert Browne

The story of the man considered to be the Father of the Pilgrims

Written by Katharine Marsh

It was the beliefs of a man from the Midlands that would ultimately lead to the Pilgrims travelling to America. Born in Rutland in the 1550s while Queen Elizabeth I was on the throne, Robert Browne would come to bring many round to his way of thinking, and they became known as Brownists.

The Church of England, the state church that had been set up by Henry VIII during the infamous English Reformation, was no stranger to dissenters. From the start, Catholics had been angry, and there were others who didn't think it was the denomination for them. However, it was Robert Browne who saw a way out by becoming the first to secede from the Church - and he went and started his own.

While Browne was educated at the University of Cambridge, above all was his dedication to Puritanism - he was one of a growing number who wanted to purify the Church of England in the reign of Elizabeth I after the constant switching between Protestantism and Catholicism. Around this time, Puritanism was spread into two strands: those who wanted to reform the Church from within, and those who wanted to break away or separate, hence the name 'Separatists'.

After his education, Browne became a lecturer at Saint Mary's Church, Islington, preaching that individual churches should have their own governing bodies to make their own decisions. Churches would be able to appoint their own clergy, and the queen and the bishops wouldn't have any power. It was all words - until Browne decided to put his ideas into action.

In 1580, Browne created a new church in Norwich with his friend, John Harrison. It was England's first Separatist Church, and put into practice his congregationalist ideas. Their church was acting independently, with doctrine being decided on by the leaders in consultation with their flock. It landed them in exile in Holland by 1582. Browne had been picked up while recruiting members in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, and it was only the first of his many brushes with the law - over his entire lifetime, Browne was imprisoned 32 times.

It was while in Holland that Browne wrote *A Treatise of Reformation Without Tarrying for Any,*

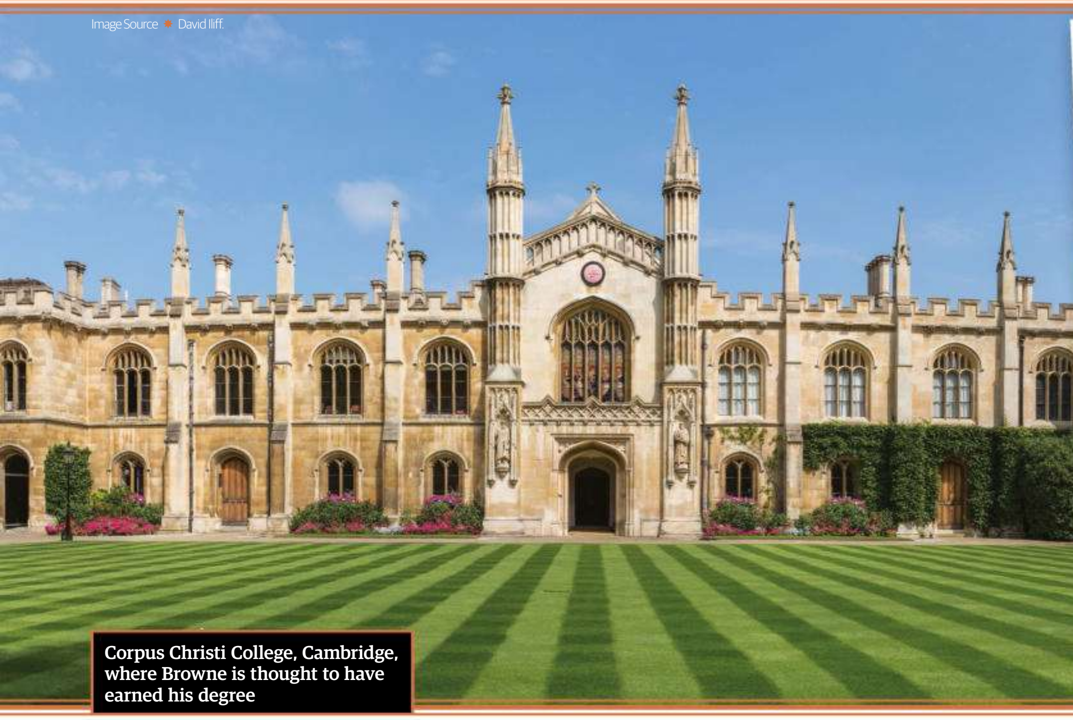


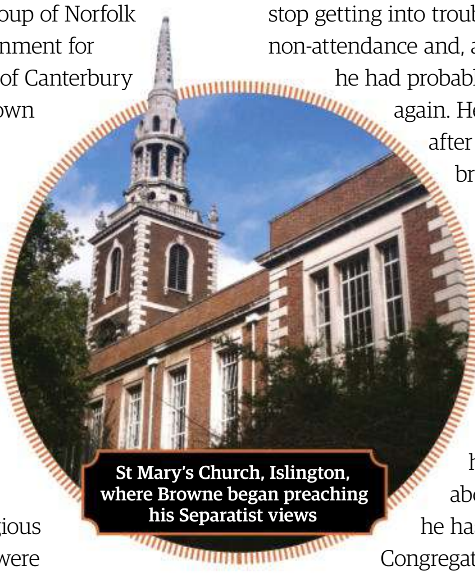
Image Source ✷ David Iliff.

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where Browne is thought to have earned his degree

in which he took aim at the Puritans, accusing them of siding with the government rather than what Jesus wanted. He then took aim at the English government itself, claiming that it had no right to interfere in matters between God and His people. It was one of the first writings regarding religious liberty to be written in the English language. It was putting his thoughts into words that would help inspire more people and ensure the longevity of his ideas.

After a couple of years, Browne was allowed to return to England, but his influence hadn't waned. In 1584, a group of Norfolk clergymen asked the government for help when the Archbishop of Canterbury was telling them to tone down their Puritan views. The clergymen were concerned that their congregations would go and find more Puritan churches instead of staying with them. They wrote: "We have struggled to keep our church members from Brownism with great difficulty."

Browne's influence was so rife in England that religious dissenters and Separatists were often referred to as Brownists up until the 1620s. In fact, Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*, thought to have been written around 1601 to 1602, even featured the word, with Sir Andrew Aguecheek saying: "I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician." Although it had been just over 20 years since Browne had set up his Separatist Church, the word was clearly still very much in popular use.



St Mary's Church, Islington, where Browne began preaching his Separatist views

Column Image Source ✷ Tolleranza.

However, despite his strong views and all that he had gone through as a result of his views, Browne began to turn his back on his Separatist ways. In 1585 he recanted his teachings and the following year became headmaster at St Olave's Grammar School in Southwark, London, and then Stamford School, before finding his way back into the ministry of the Church of England. He didn't stop getting into trouble, though. He was fined for non-attendance and, as a result, some argue that he had probably become a Separatist once again. He died in prison around 1633 after being arrested for a drunken brawl with a watchman.

Browne's dalliances with the law and his reversion to the state religion made little impact on how he was viewed by Separatists after his death. The colonists who sailed to America on the Mayflower held their Brownist views above all others, which is why he has been called the founder of Congregationalism and the Father of the Pilgrims. He influenced Separatism, going so far as to found his own movement and Church; his actions opened the door for others to follow in his footsteps – it just so happened that some of them were settling a new colony in the New World.

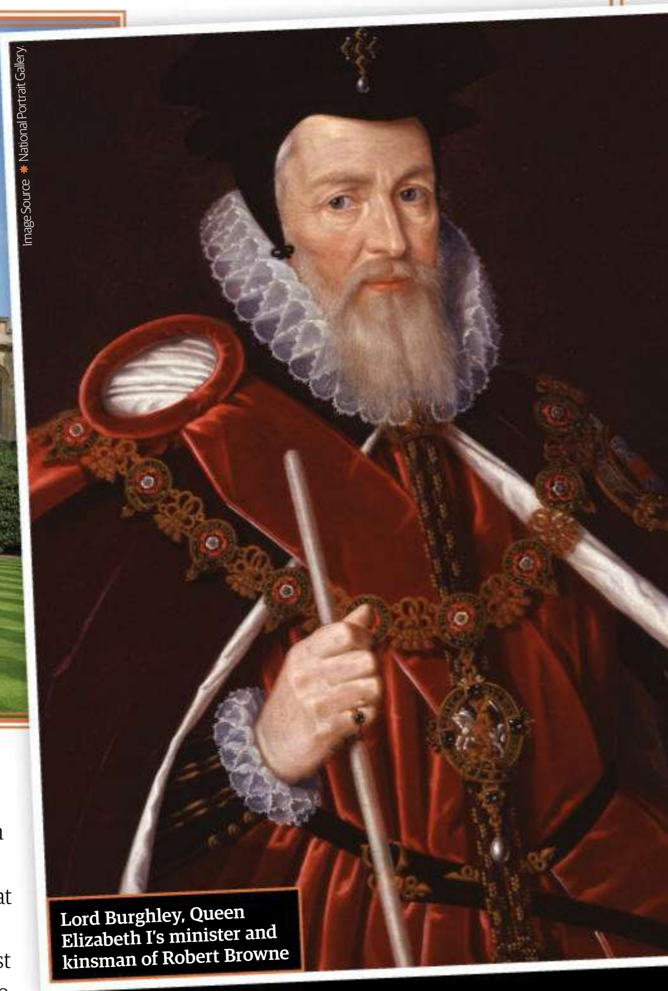


Image Source ✷ National Portrait Gallery

Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth I's minister and kinsman of Robert Browne

LORD BURGHLEY

When you're making trouble, it's usually best to know someone who can keep you out of prison

Being related to someone in power usually comes with its perks – especially if that someone is Queen Elizabeth I's chief minister. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was principal adviser to the monarch for most of her reign and, as a result, had a significant amount of influence at Court.

When Burghley received a complaint about Robert Browne and his actions of "delivering unto the people corrupt and contentious doctrine" at Bury St Edmunds in 1581, he made his excuses for his relative to keep him out of trouble. When further complaints were made later that year, Browne was even brought in front of the archbishop, but Burghley forced him to release his new prisoner. Unfortunately for the government, that meant Browne returned to his followers with a reputation that could only help him to increase his standing.

When Browne returned from his exile in Holland and returned to the Church of England, he was given the rectory of Achurch in Northamptonshire by Burghley. In fact, it had been obtained by him two years prior, to give to his kinsman. Whatever happened to Browne, Burghley had his back and was able to steer him away from most punishments – although he didn't have the power to stop the exile.

Church, state & witchcraft

James VI and I had an obsession with witchcraft that bled into the doctrines of Church, state, and even the beliefs of the first generation of Pilgrims leaving England

Written by Derek Wilson

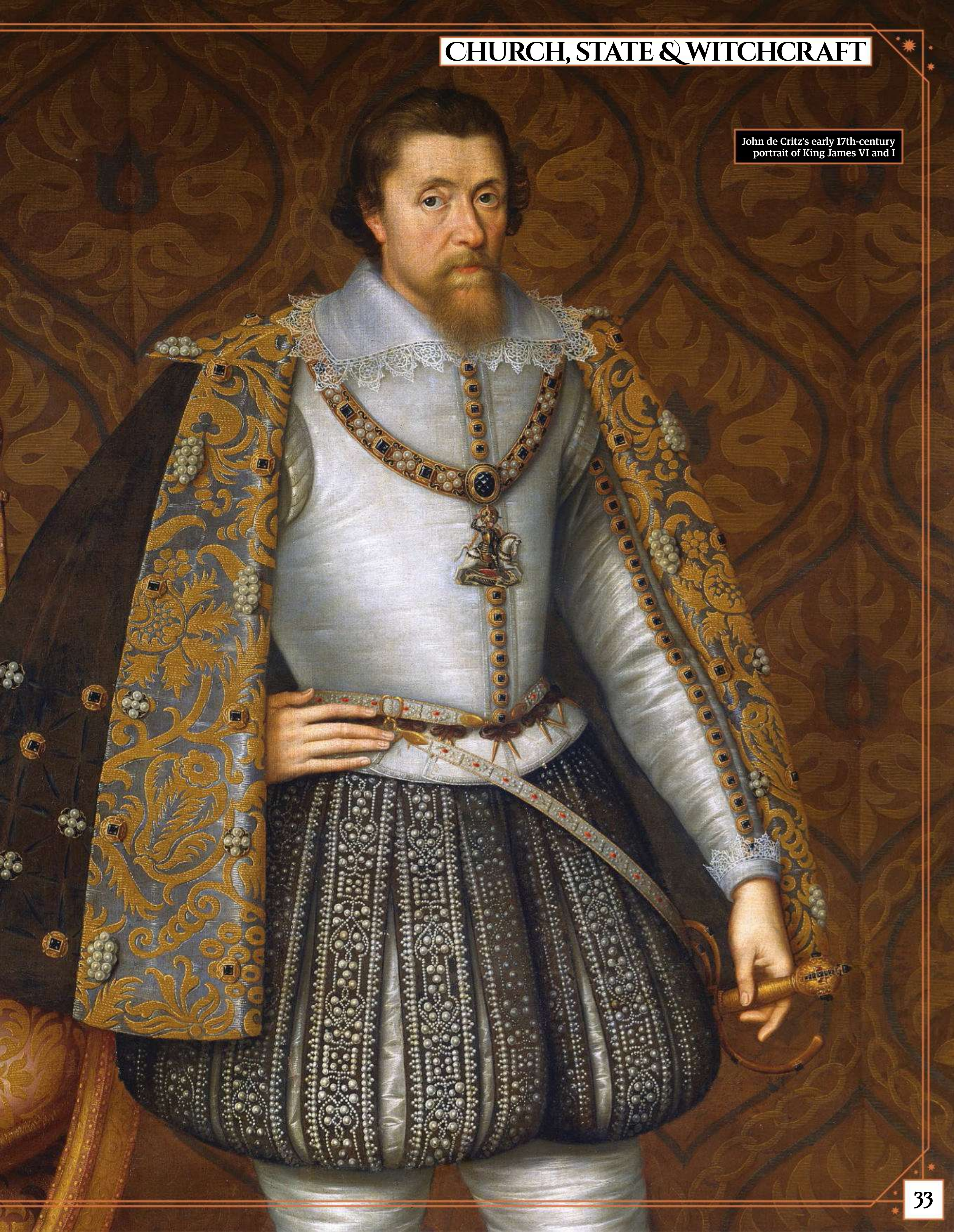
“The fearful abounding at this time is this country, of these detestable slaves of the Devil, the Witches or enchanters, hath moved me (beloved reader) to dispatch in post, this following treatise of mine, not in any way (as I protest) to serve for a show of my learning and ingenuity, but only (moved of conscience) to press thereby, so far as I can, to resolve the doubting hearts of many; both that such assaults of Satan are most certainly practiced, and that the instruments thereof, merit most severely to be punished.”

So began the preface to a remarkable book published in Edinburgh in 1597. *Daemonologie* was remarkable for two reasons; it was a product of the most serious witch mania ever to erupt in Britain, and it was written by a reigning British monarch. What prompted the King of Scotland to venture, personally, into the campaign against black magic? There seem to be three causes that impelled him to take up his pen. The first and most deep-seated was James’s belief in his own intellectual talent. He was a natural scholar, and had a particular fascination for theology, believing that, as both a king and savant, he had a responsibility to impart wisdom to his people. Secondly, he deemed himself to have been the object of a specific satanic attack in 1589, something that made a deep impression on him. Thirdly, he was always on the watch for treason and firmly maintained that the potential enemies of the Crown were motived by demonic forces.

James VI and I
b.1566-d.1625
♛ 1567-1625
Son of Mary, Queen of Scots and her second husband, Lord Darnley, James became king of Scotland after his mother was ousted. His reign was characterised by superstition. After the death of Elizabeth I of England, he became king of England too in 1603

James Stuart was King of Scotland from the age of one. His mother Mary, Queen of Scots, was forced to abdicate in July 1567 and the boy therefore had no pattern of kingship on which to model himself. His upbringing was entrusted to succession of regents from warring factions and he was subjected to a rigid educational regime by tutors, of whom the chief was the gifted but irascible Presbyterian, George Buchanan. By his mid-teens, James had mastered Latin, Greek and French and was thoroughly

Image Source ✱ John de Critz.



John de Critz's early 17th-century portrait of King James VI and I grounded in the Bible and Calvinist doctrine. His undoubted academic ability was coupled with a profound sense of his divine right as ruler, so his opinions had the support (as he believed) not only of reason, but also of God.

Belief in and fear of witchcraft had roots in folk religion and both Catholic and Protestant theology. For centuries in Europe, it had been generally assumed that the exponents of magic were divided into two groups: there were wise women and men (wise-ards or wizards) who were experts in herbal remedies and practised benign 'white' magic, and those who turned to 'maleficium', black magic, which brought misfortune on its victims. Then, in the 1480s, the situation changed drastically. The Catholic Church, increasingly embroiled in a war with heretics of various kinds, changed the definition of witchcraft. The focus was no longer on the good or bad effects produced by magical means but on the origin of the powers claimed by witches and wizards. Pope Innocent VIII decreed that such people had made a pact with Satan or his agents. If found guilty by an ecclesiastical court, these enemies of God were to be handed over to the secular authorities for execution – usually by burning in continental Europe. An officially approved handbook, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, was published, which gave details of how witches could be identified and how they should be investigated (a process including torture). Rolling off the new printing presses in great numbers, it became a bestseller and by 1600 it had gone through 28 editions. Its description of witchcraft was one of the very few topics on which Catholics and Protestants agreed during the Reformation, and the result was outbreaks of witch mania and the execution of thousands of victims, most of whom were women.

> "Leading Lutheran theologians were totally committed to the concept of spiritual warfare"

However, persecution was not universal: the British Isles was one area that largely escaped the frenzy and the *Malleus Maleficarum* was not translated into English. That is not to say that the governments in Westminster and Edinburgh were not concerned with the problem – Witchcraft Acts were passed in both parliaments in 1563, but the one drafted north of the border was more draconian and classed both the practice of witchcraft and the consulting of witches as capital offences. However, over the next 25 years there were few prosecutions and even fewer actual convictions. This was the situation when the complex events of 1587-91 began.

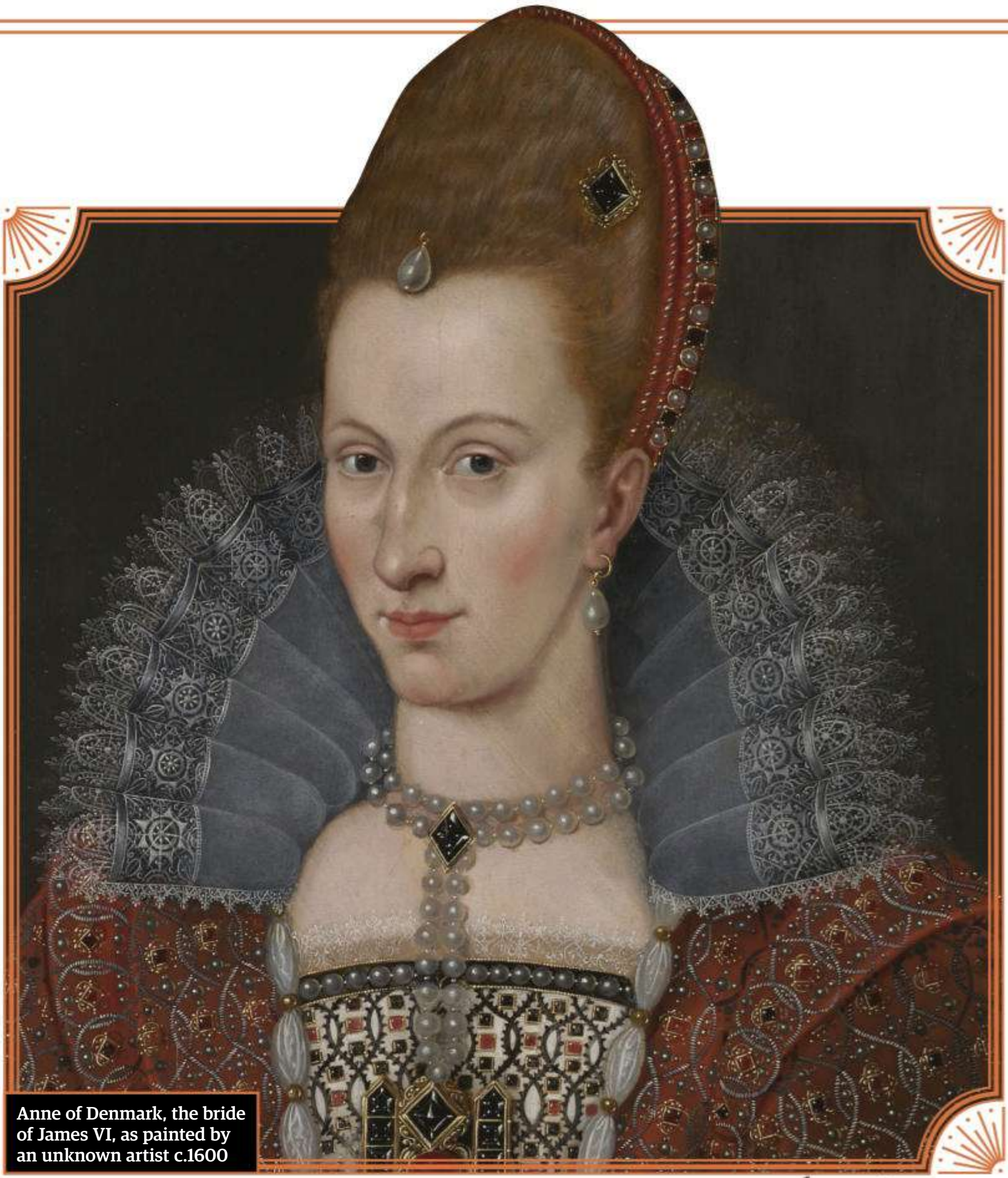

Anne of Denmark, the bride of James VI, as painted by an unknown artist c.1600

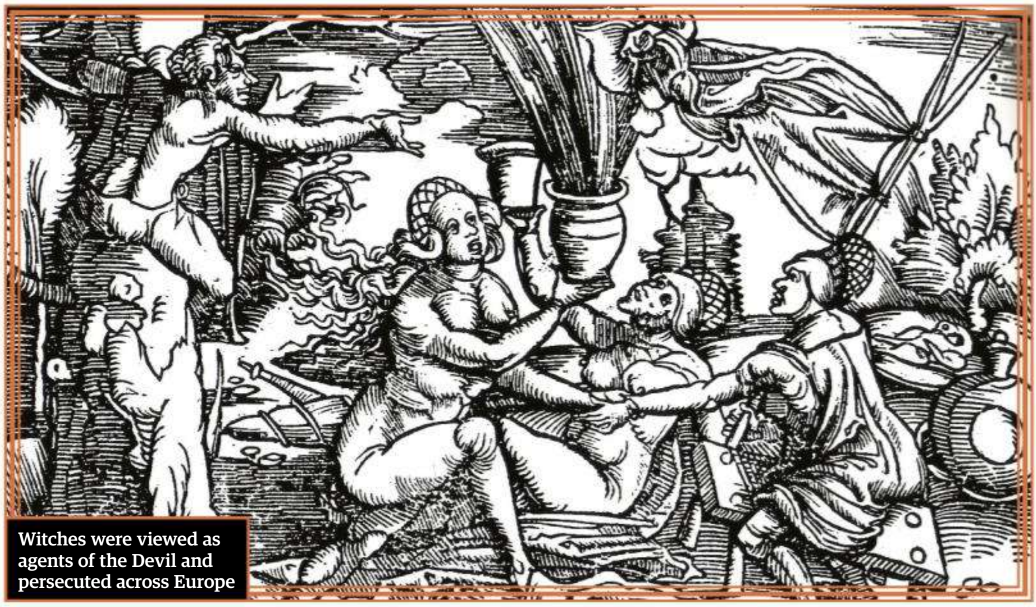
Image Source ✱ Government Art Collection.

James' rule was still rendered precarious by faction fighting among the Scottish nobles. Prominent among them was Francis Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell (c.1562-1612) who, as an illegitimate grandson of James V, was related to James' mother, Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary had for many years been enjoying the 'hospitality' of Elizabeth I and had been the focus of several plots against the English queen, who reluctantly ordered her execution in February 1587. Bothwell was outraged and campaigned vigorously for a war of revenge, but was indignant to discover that James had no taste for such a conflict.

In the following year, the earl saw another opportunity for his anti-English policy: the Spanish Armada, having failed to invade England, was being forced north, around the Scottish coast. James appointed Bothwell to the post of Lord Admiral with instructions to attack the Spanish vessels, but the earl had other ideas. He planned to enlist the support of King Philip's ships and

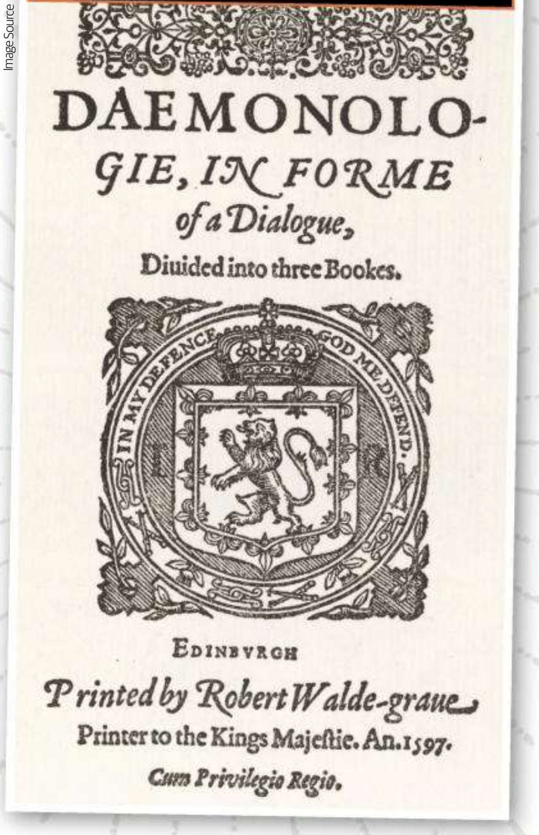
men in a secondary attack on England. His plot involved raising his own armed force, alliances with Catholic nobles on both sides of the border and messages to Madrid. When the scheme fell apart, James had its ringleader imprisoned but, with remarkable, even foolhardy, forbearance, be restored Bothwell to favour in September 1589. The king had something more important to think about - he was about to marry a Danish princess. It is with the arrangements for his wedding to Anne, sister of Christian IV of Denmark, that our story takes a bizarre twist - involving witchcraft.

The 15-year-old princess set out from Copenhagen in a convoy bound for Edinburgh, but severe storms forced them to head for shelter on the Norwegian coast. There was nothing unusual about autumnal gales in this region, but James felt that he was being balked and set off in October to fetch his bride himself. He spent six months at the Danish court, where he hugely relished intellectual debate with the scholars and clergy who enjoyed royal patronage. What he encountered was what we would now consider a strange mixture of superstition and science. The leading Lutheran theologians were totally committed to the concept of spiritual warfare being waged between the forces of good and evil and had a well-developed demonology based on the Bible and the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Their understanding of witchcraft was not confined to theory. So great was the threat



Witches were viewed as agents of the Devil and persecuted across Europe

Image Source ✱ Hexen und Hexenverfolgung im deutschen Südwesten, 1994, p. 94.



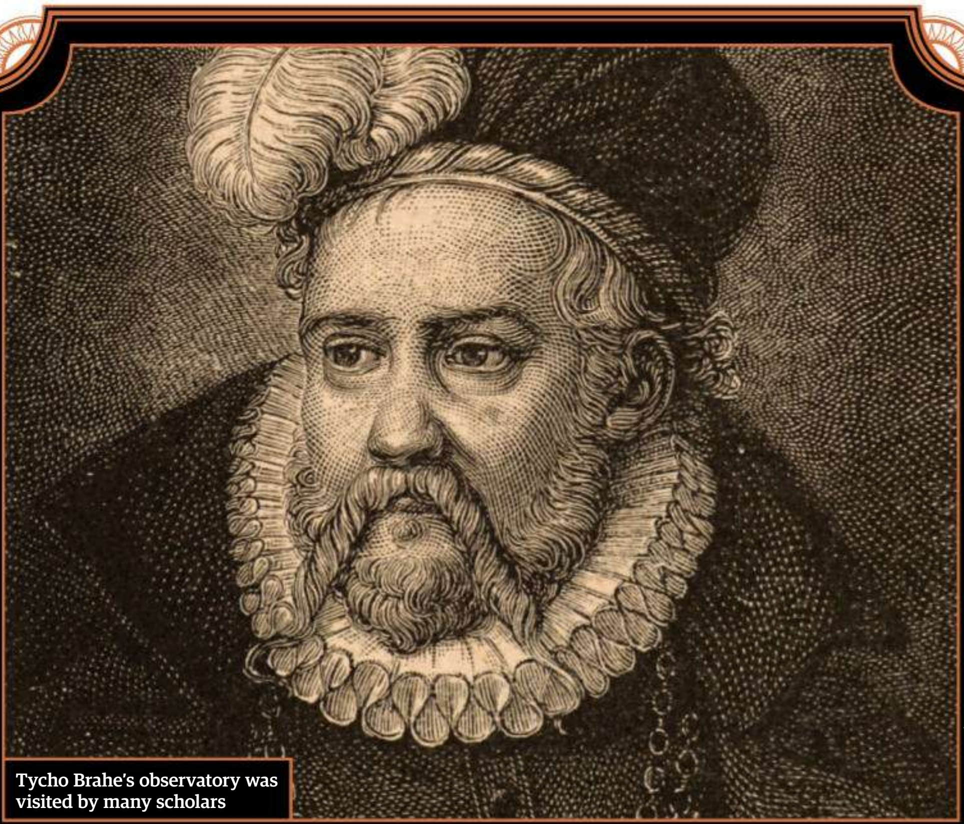
The title page of *Daemonologie* by King James VI and I

DAEMONOLO-
GIE, IN FORME
of a Dialogue,
Diuided into three Bookes.

IN MY DEFENCE GOD ME DEFEND.

EDINBVRGH
Printed by Robert Walde-graue
Printer to the Kings Majeſtie. An. 1597.
Cum Privilegio Regio.

Image Source ✱ Alamy.



Tycho Brahe's observatory was visited by many scholars

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

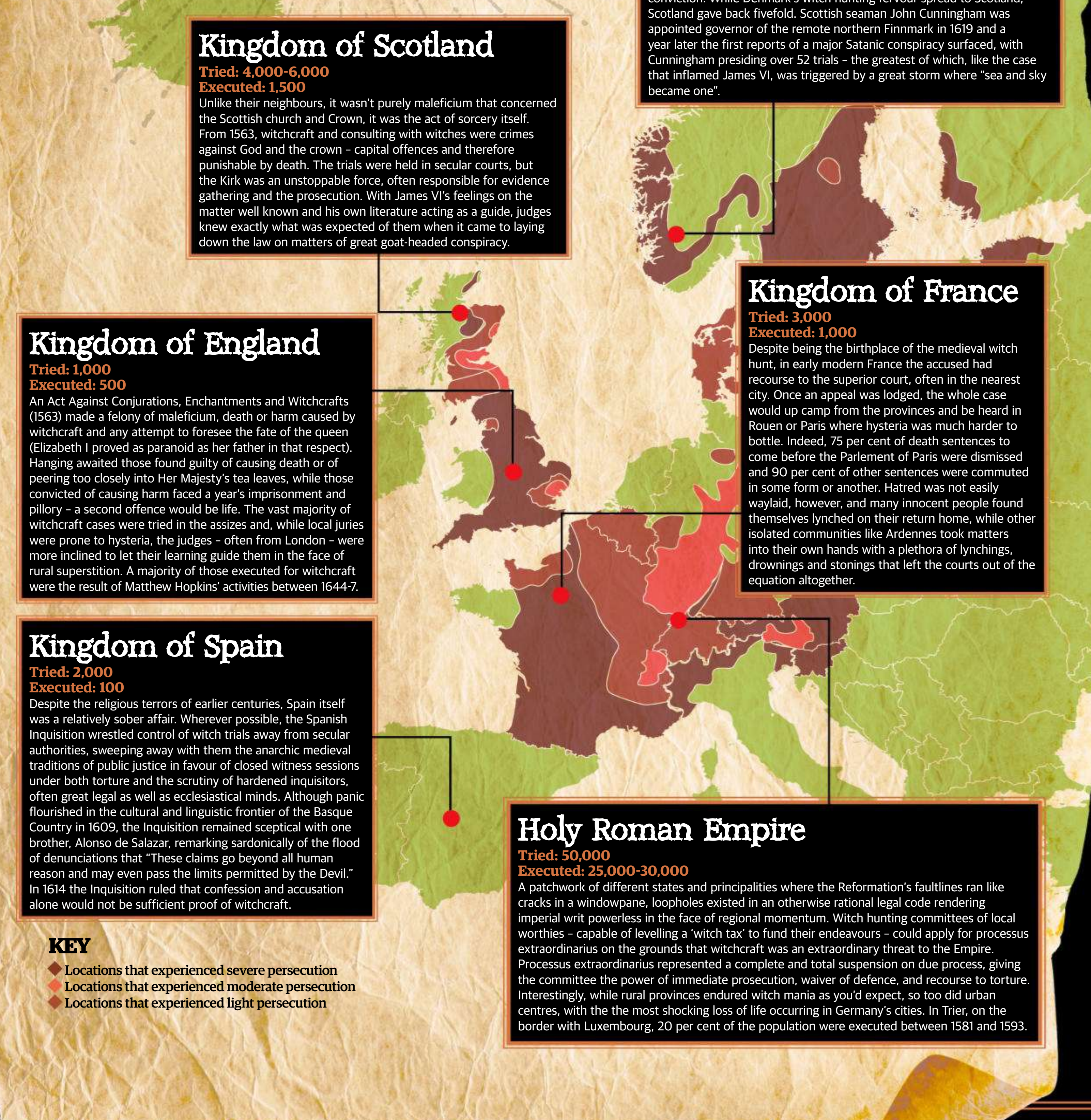
THE KING'S IDOL

Meet the man who James VI saw as his intellectual equal

James could scarcely avoid being impressed by Tycho Brahe (1546-1601). As well as being famous as one of the leading experimental scientists of the age, he was a colourful extrovert who wore a metal sheath over his nose to cover an old fencing scar, threw lavish parties and kept an elk as an indoor pet. Brahe had an elaborate research complex, which included a laboratory, an observatory, a library and a workshop for the manufacture of astronomical instruments. He made thousands of observations and calculations about the movement of heavenly bodies, which he believed were important principally for the casting of accurate horoscopes. Though at the cutting edge of scientific research, Brahe was wedded to Lutheran beliefs about demonology. James VI and I must have been delighted that the opinions of this celebrity matched his own so closely.

A continent gripped by conspiracy

Scotland wasn't unique in the persecution of witches, but the role played by the crown was without equal



Kingdom of Scotland

Tried: 4,000-6,000
Executed: 1,500

Unlike their neighbours, it wasn't purely maleficium that concerned the Scottish church and Crown, it was the act of sorcery itself. From 1563, witchcraft and consulting with witches were crimes against God and the crown – capital offences and therefore punishable by death. The trials were held in secular courts, but the Kirk was an unstoppable force, often responsible for evidence gathering and the prosecution. With James VI's feelings on the matter well known and his own literature acting as a guide, judges knew exactly what was expected of them when it came to laying down the law on matters of great goat-headed conspiracy.

Kingdom of England

Tried: 1,000
Executed: 500

An Act Against Conjurations, Enchantments and Witchcrafts (1563) made a felony of maleficium, death or harm caused by witchcraft and any attempt to foresee the fate of the queen (Elizabeth I proved as paranoid as her father in that respect). Hanging awaited those found guilty of causing death or of peering too closely into Her Majesty's tea leaves, while those convicted of causing harm faced a year's imprisonment and pillory – a second offence would be life. The vast majority of witchcraft cases were tried in the assizes and, while local juries were prone to hysteria, the judges – often from London – were more inclined to let their learning guide them in the face of rural superstition. A majority of those executed for witchcraft were the result of Matthew Hopkins' activities between 1644-7.

Kingdom of Spain

Tried: 2,000
Executed: 100

Despite the religious terrors of earlier centuries, Spain itself was a relatively sober affair. Wherever possible, the Spanish Inquisition wrestled control of witch trials away from secular authorities, sweeping away with them the anarchic medieval traditions of public justice in favour of closed witness sessions under both torture and the scrutiny of hardened inquisitors, often great legal as well as ecclesiastical minds. Although panic flourished in the cultural and linguistic frontier of the Basque Country in 1609, the Inquisition remained sceptical with one brother, Alonso de Salazar, remarking sardonically of the flood of denunciations that "These claims go beyond all human reason and may even pass the limits permitted by the Devil." In 1614 the Inquisition ruled that confession and accusation alone would not be sufficient proof of witchcraft.

Kingdom of Denmark and Norway

Tried: 3,400
Executed: 1,350

Though the witch hunt capital of Scandinavia, mass persecutions in Denmark and Norway were relatively rare thanks to the limits of the Copenhagen Articles (1547), which ruled that accusations from a dishonest person – including witches – could not form the basis of another's conviction. While Denmark's witch hunting fervour spread to Scotland, Scotland gave back fivefold. Scottish seaman John Cunningham was appointed governor of the remote northern Finnmark in 1619 and a year later the first reports of a major Satanic conspiracy surfaced, with Cunningham presiding over 52 trials – the greatest of which, like the case that inflamed James VI, was triggered by a great storm where "sea and sky became one".

Kingdom of France

Tried: 3,000
Executed: 1,000

Despite being the birthplace of the medieval witch hunt, in early modern France the accused had recourse to the superior court, often in the nearest city. Once an appeal was lodged, the whole case would up camp from the provinces and be heard in Rouen or Paris where hysteria was much harder to bottle. Indeed, 75 per cent of death sentences to come before the Parlement of Paris were dismissed and 90 per cent of other sentences were commuted in some form or another. Hatred was not easily waylaid, however, and many innocent people found themselves lynched on their return home, while other isolated communities like Ardennes took matters into their own hands with a plethora of lynchings, drownings and stonings that left the courts out of the equation altogether.

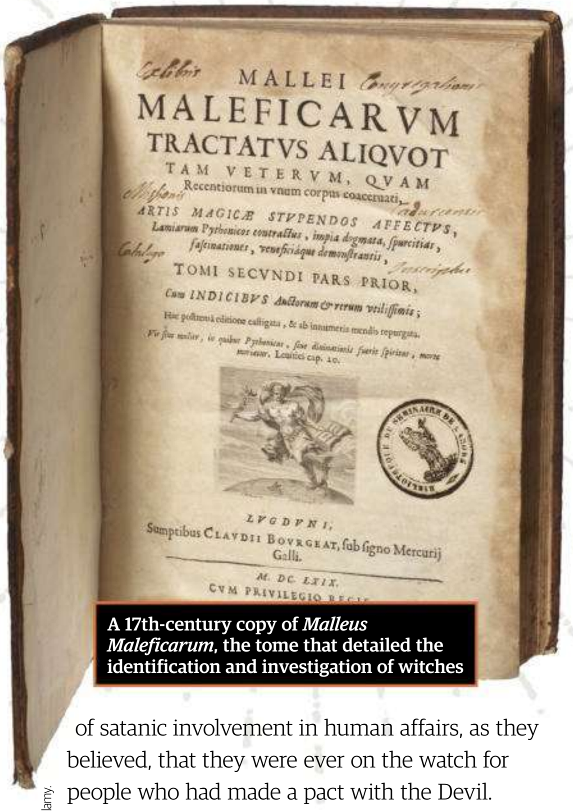
Holy Roman Empire

Tried: 50,000
Executed: 25,000-30,000

A patchwork of different states and principalities where the Reformation's faultlines ran like cracks in a windowpane, loopholes existed in an otherwise rational legal code rendering imperial writ powerless in the face of regional momentum. Witch hunting committees of local worthies – capable of levelling a 'witch tax' to fund their endeavours – could apply for processus extraordinarius on the grounds that witchcraft was an extraordinary threat to the Empire. Processus extraordinarius represented a complete and total suspension on due process, giving the committee the power of immediate prosecution, waiver of defence, and recourse to torture. Interestingly, while rural provinces endured witch mania as you'd expect, so too did urban centres, with the the most shocking loss of life occurring in Germany's cities. In Trier, on the border with Luxembourg, 20 per cent of the population were executed between 1581 and 1593.

KEY

- ◆ Locations that experienced severe persecution
- ◆ Locations that experienced moderate persecution
- ◆ Locations that experienced light persecution



MALLEI
MALEFICARVM
TRACTATVS ALIQVOT
TAM VETERVM, QVAM
Recentiorum in vnum corpus coaceruati,
ARTIS MAGICÆ STVPENDOS AFFECTVS,
TOMI SECVNDI PARS PRIOR,
Cum INDICIBVS Auctorum & rerum vtiliſſimis;

LVGDVNI,
Sumptibus CLAVDII BOVRGEAT, ſub ſigno Mercurij
Galli.
M. DC. LXIX.
CVM PRIVILEGIO REGIS.

A 17th-century copy of *Malleus Maleficarum*, the tome that detailed the identification and investigation of witches

Image Source ✻ Alamy.

of satanic involvement in human affairs, as they believed, that they were ever on the watch for people who had made a pact with the Devil.

Also present at the Danish court were free-thinking philosopher-scientists, foremost among whom was the royal astrologer, Tycho Brahe, who was at the forefront of European study of the movement of heavenly bodies. James, who regarded himself as an academic, was in his element among some of the sophisticated leaders of European thought. He integrated his new insights into his inherited pattern of belief and thought to form a philosophy of his own.

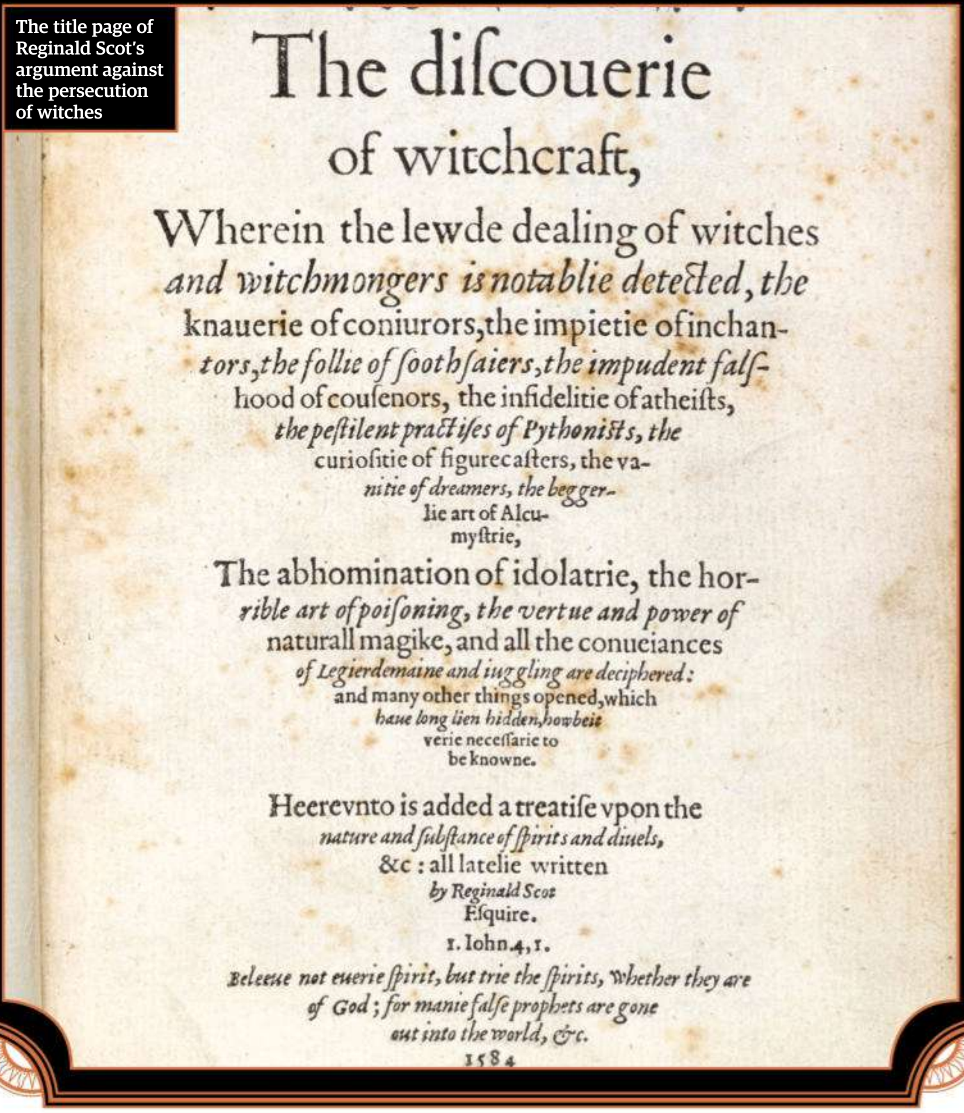
Fundamental to his understanding of sovereignty was his conviction that kings were God's anointed representatives. It followed, therefore, that those who opposed the king opposed God and were thus agents of the Devil – an idea that applied to treason and also to witchcraft. James now "saw clearly" that the storms that had stopped Anne's voyage to Scotland had been whipped up by those wielding satanic power, a view that was confirmed when his own return home in May 1590 was also hampered by foul weather. Whether he would have taken any action on his own initiative is not clear but, within weeks, news arrived from Denmark that made up his mind for him. The political situation there was similar to the one that had existed a few years earlier in Scotland: squabbling nobles governing the country in the name of an underage king. In the summer of 1590, the chief minister was charged by his rivals with various offences, including endangering the life of Princess Anne by sending her to sea in a poorly equipped ship. He countered by asserting that the near shipwreck had been caused by witches, leading to the arrest of several women and the eventual execution of at least a dozen of them. Under torture, some told their interrogators what they wanted to hear. However, some, if the records are to be believed, needed no pressure to confess to the most bizarre activities and the possession of arcane powers. They enjoyed the celebrity of being thought to have supernatural gifts and claimed to have met with Satan and received authority from him to send demons aboard the royal ships to steer them to near-disaster.

James needed no further incentive to set in motion his own witch hunt on his side of the water – this was the point at which Scottish politics and

THE WITCH REDEEMER

Not everyone supported the idea of witch hunting

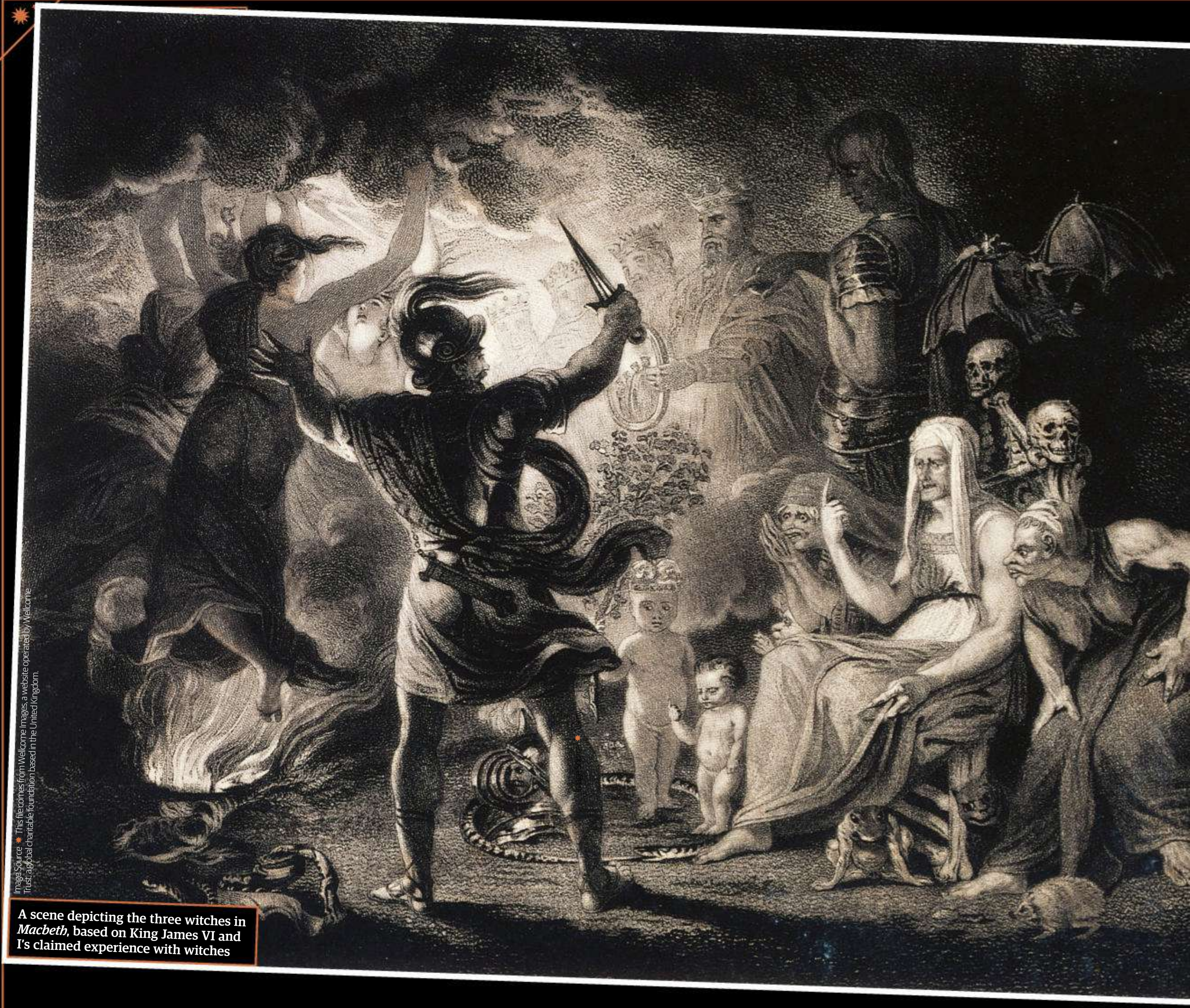
Reginald Scot (c.1538-1599) is one of the many solid citizens of independent but quiet demeanour who formed the backbone of Tudor England. He was a landowner with modest estates in Kent, did his stint as a Justice of the Peace and served as an MP for New Romney in the Armada year. He wrote two books, both remarkable for being well-informed and commonsensical. The first (1576) was a manual on hop-growing, but his more original work was *The Discoverie Of Witchcraft Wherein The Lewd Dealing Of Witches And Witchmongers Is Notablie Detected* (1584). Scot was appalled by the persecution of supposed witches and set out to prove from a variety of authorities, ancient and contemporary, that belief in 'magic' was contrary to scripture and reason. As well as denouncing witch trials, his book provided a compendious list of common beliefs and practices involving spells, alchemy and fraud, as well as the behaviour of witches. Small wonder that King James found Scot's work pernicious.



The title page of Reginald Scot's argument against the persecution of witches

The diſcouerie
of witchcraft,
Wherein the lewde dealing of witches
and witchmongers is notablie detected, the
knauerie of coniurors, the impietie of inchantors,
the follie of ſoothſaiers, the impudent falſhood
of couſenors, the infidelitie of atheiſts,
the peſtilent practiſes of Pythoniſts, the
curioſitie of figurecaſters, the vanitie
of dreamers, the beggerlie
art of Alcumyſtrie,
The abhomination of idolatrie, the horrible
art of poiſoning, the vertue and power of
naturall magike, and all the conueiances
of Legierdemaine and iuggling are deciphered:
and many other things opened, which
haue long lien hidden, howbeit
verie neceſſarie to
be knowne.
Heereunto is added a treatiſe vpon the
nature and ſubſtance of ſpirits and diuels,
&c: all latelie written
by Reginald Scot
Eſquire.
1. Iohn 4, 1.
Beleeue not euerie ſpirit, but trie the ſpirits, whether they are
of God; for manie falſe prophets are gone
out into the world, &c.
1584

Image Source ✻ Alamy.



A scene depicting the three witches in *Macbeth*, based on King James VI and I's claimed experience with witches

Image Source ✱ This file comes from Wellcome Images, a website operated by Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation based in the United Kingdom.

superstition came together. In his desire to discover the likely outcome of his schemes, Bothwell had resorted to witches who claimed clairvoyant gifts. When this became known to his opponents, the practitioners were arrested and, under examination, they accused the earl of bribing them to use their powers to kill the king by raising storms to overwhelm the royal fleet. Treason and maleficium thus merged to present James with a terrifying combination of natural and supernatural forces. Troops loyal to the king pursued Bothwell - now in open rebellion - but, despite many encounters, the earl escaped to the continent in 1595 and spent the rest of his life in exile.

Meanwhile, the more sensational aspect of the affair became the trial of a coven of witches at North Berwick. James attended some of the investigations and heard the main suspects describe their meetings with the prince of darkness. Satan, they averred, had held court in the Auld Kirk at North Berwick, sitting in the pulpit, clad in a black gown and wearing a tall black hat. His beak-like nose and glowing eyes gave him a frightening aspect and 200 of his devotees had arrived, some flying through the air, eager to do his bidding. According to the records, James was initially sceptical about all this but was convinced when, according to a contemporary report, one of the prime suspects, Agnes Sampson (later strangled and burned for her crimes), told him:

> *"...the very words which passed between the King's Majesty and his Queen at Upslo in Norway the first night of marriage, with the answers each to other, whereat the King's Majesty wondered greatly, and swore by the living God, that he believed all the devils in hell could not have discovered the same, acknowledging her words to be more true, and therefore gave the more credit to the rest..."*

James may also have been swayed by the flattering testimony, which, according to the accused, came directly from Satan's own mouth. When asked why his efforts to harm the king had so far proved ineffective, the archfiend replied: "He is a man of God. He does no wrong wittingly, but is inclined to all godliness, justice and virtue." This played directly to James's belief in the holy nature of his calling - there could be no greater proof of this than the testimony of God's primary adversary.

One aspect of the unspeakable tortures to which the original suspects were subjected was this 'revealing' of other offenders against the 1563 Act. Detainees turned informer in the hope of appeasing their interrogators, so that accusations and arrests rippled outward from the centre until more than 100 suspects had been rounded up. For all the fear engendered by these cases, it is interesting to note that juries were not always quick to deliver

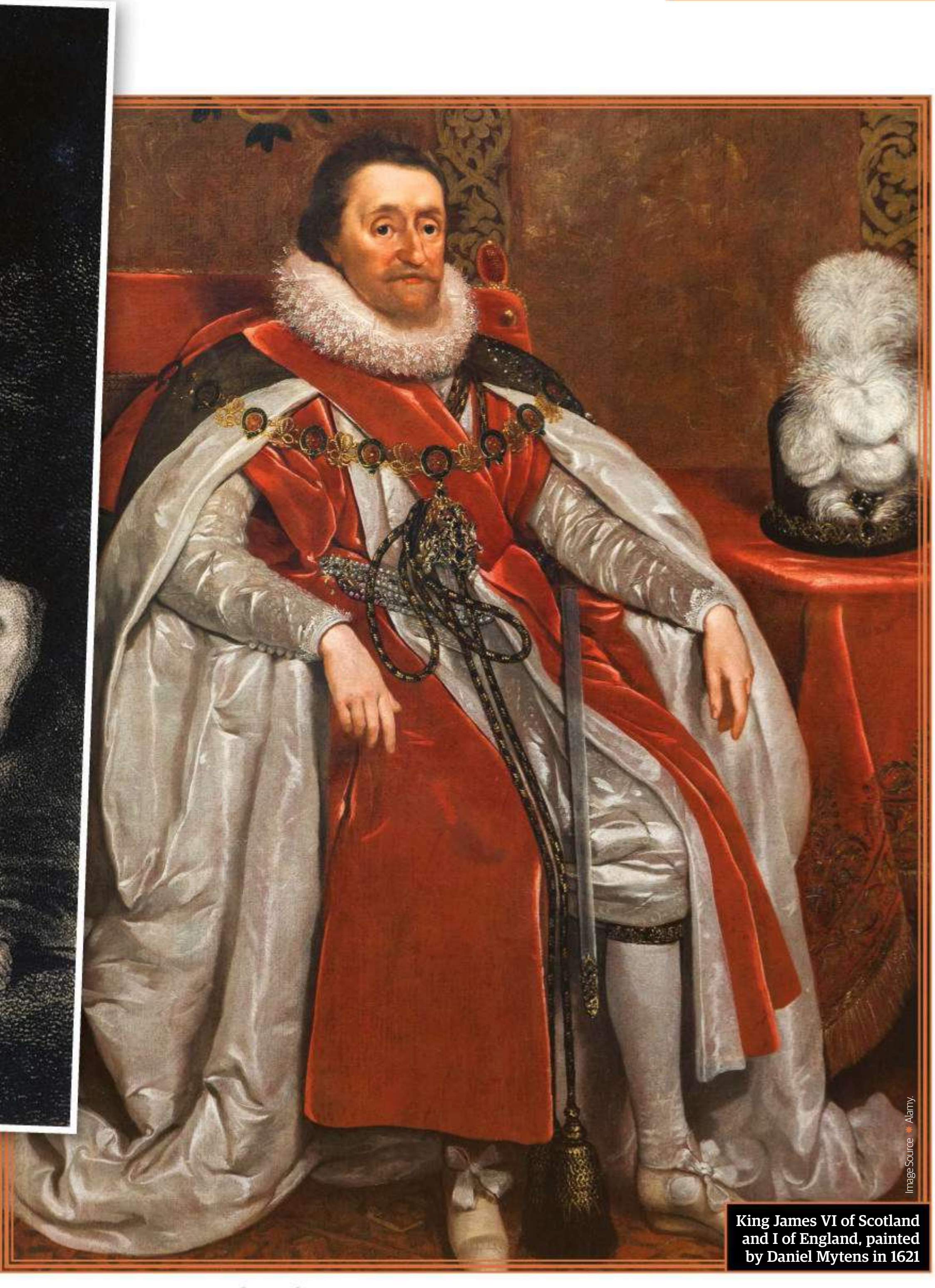
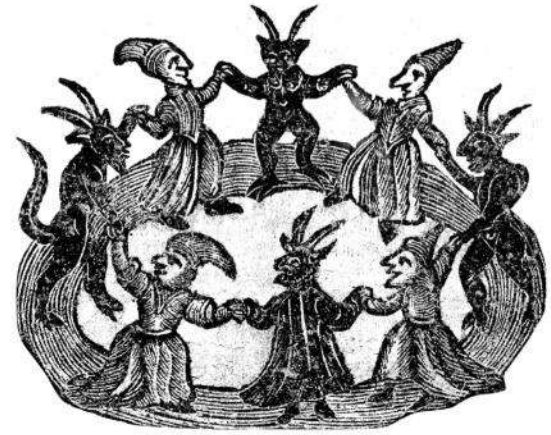


Image Source • Alamy.

King James VI of Scotland and I of England, painted by Daniel Mytens in 1621



guilty verdicts. Equally interesting is the king's angry reaction when a witch was acquitted. Since treason and witchcraft were inextricably bound in his thinking, a lenient judgement was akin to disloyalty. He pointed out to the "misguided" jurors how close to death he had been brought by demonic agency:

> *"...for the good of this country, which enjoyeth peace by my life ... as I have thus begun, so propose I to go forward; not because I am James Stuart and can command so many thousands of men, but because God hath made me a king and judge to judge righteous judgement..."*

True to his word, James gave his subjects the benefit of his further wisdom on witchcraft in a slender volume entitled *Daemonologie* in 1597. To the modern reader this book may seem idiosyncratic, but it very much caught the mood of the times. Only a decade earlier, an anonymous German author had regaled his readers with a cautionary tale, *Historia Von D. Johann Fausten*, about a scholar who made a pact with the devil and, at about the same time that *Daemonologie* appeared, Christopher Marlowe rendered the *Historia* into a play: *The Tragical History Of The Life And Death Of Doctor Faustus*, which was performed by the Admiral's Men. However, not everyone was caught up in the witch craze. James's principal target was Reginald Scot, a down-to-earth Kentish gentleman who, in 1584, had sought to explode the whole concept of magic in his book *The Discoverie Of Witchcraft*.

Using the device of a dialogue, the king draws upon the Bible and folklore in his exploration of the heavenly warfare of spiritual forces. But his main interest continues to be in witches, how they can be recognised and how they must be exterminated, and he has a warning for magistrates:

> *"...to spare the life and not to strike when God bids strike and so severely punish ... so odious a fault and treason against God ... is not only unlawful but doubtless no less sin in that magistrate..."*

On the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, the English crown was offered to James, who became monarch of both kingdoms. Thereafter, many more exciting and interesting opportunities were opened to him and he gradually abandoned his mission against witches. In 1606, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was performed at Hampton Court as a celebration of the king's Scottish ancestry, but also a nod towards his campaign against satanic activity. It is inconceivable that when three witches were introduced near the beginning of the play, James would not have recognised certain tropes in the dialogue, particularly when the crones discuss how they will attack the captain of a ship bound for Aleppo with bad weather.

That this allusion was explicit enough for the theatre crowds of the time speaks volumes about how James' obsession with stamping out witchcraft became part of the popular consciousness. Add to this his King James Bible – the first English translation of the text, which, though Anglican, was worked on and appreciated by many Puritans – and his firm belief that God chose certain people to fulfil His will (James believed in the Divine Right of Kings; Puritans that God elected them for grace), and it's unsurprising that despite themselves, many of James' Puritan subjects would embrace many of his rigorous attitudes and continue them, eventually carrying them to the New World.

Pilgrims & wayfarers

How the revolutionary ideas of the Pilgrim Fathers shaped America – for good and ill

Written by Edoardo Albert

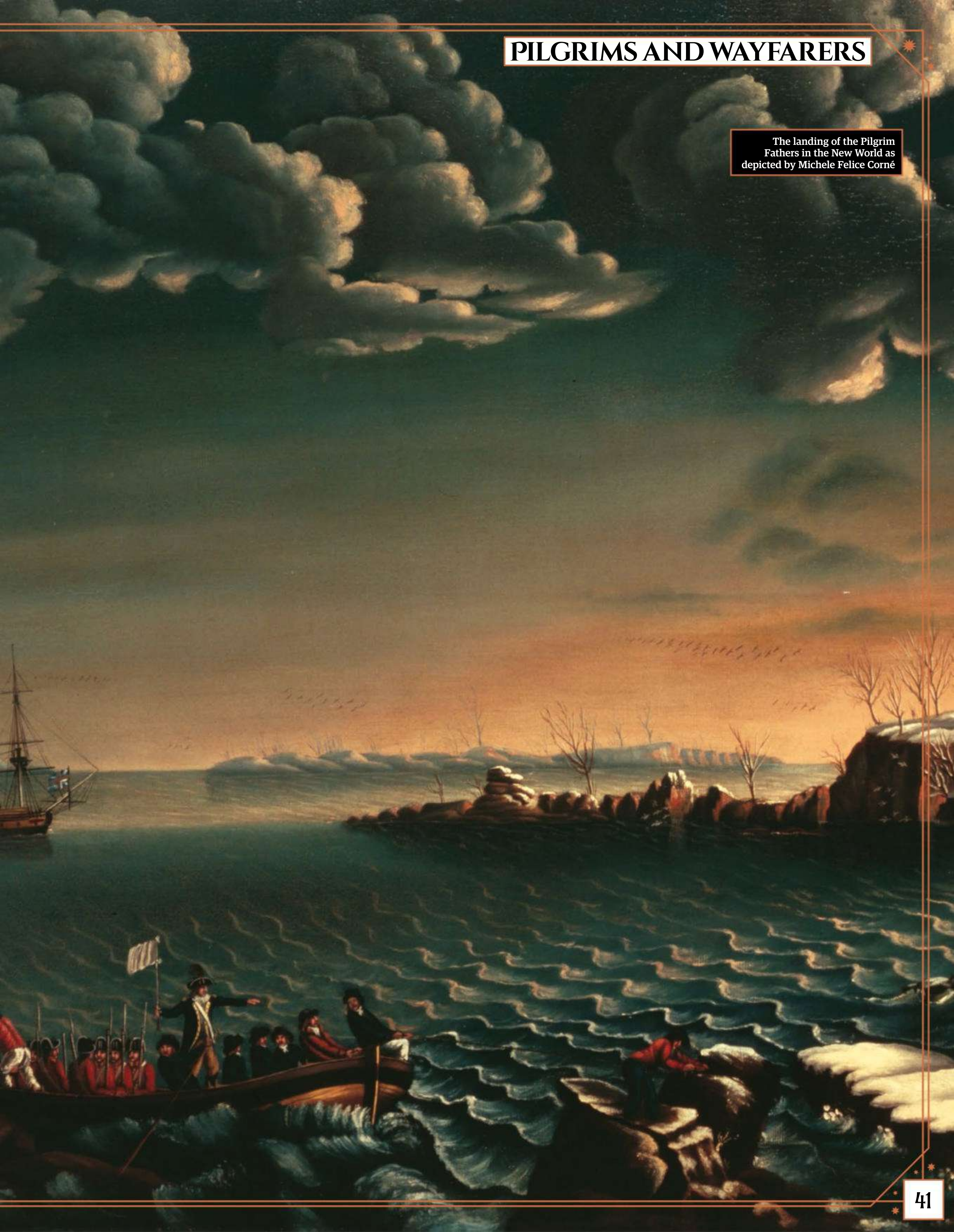
To understand the beliefs and passions that led people to leave their homes and set up precarious new colonies on the other side of the world, it is necessary to understand how the explosion of the Reformation continued to set off bombs throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. For what the Reformation destroyed was the unity of life, belief and thought that characterised medieval Europe: one king, one faith, one people, one society. The human body was the model for the state, with all its different parts cooperating together for the good of the whole but with each assigned different roles. It was, though, above all else a unity.

> The Puritan Pilgrims were motivated by a desire to set up their own religious community, bound by their own laws

When the Reformation broke the faith, it broke everything else too – but the one belief it did not break was the belief that the state should be a unity of rule, faith and society. Not unreasonably, people thought that a society divided into different competing factions or parties would inevitably fall apart or come to civil strife. The problem, in the two centuries following the Reformation, was that while everyone still believed a people and a country should have unity of belief, people could not agree on what that faith should be. For those countries that remained Catholic, it was relatively straightforward, although the Wars of Religion in France (1562 -1598) were indicative of how different beliefs could all but tear a country apart. In England, James I, the first Stuart king, was determined that such a conflict should not break out in his realm, where the state church, the Church of England, with the king as its head, appeared to provide the national unity that was still the sought-for aim of most people in the realm.

Most, but not all. By the 17th century, there were groups of people in England who had given up hope of the Church of England purifying itself of what they considered to be the non-Biblical parts of its belief and practice. Seeking to purify the church of this Catholic taint, they came to be called Puritans. While some continued to believe that the Church of England could be reformed from within, others had come to the conclusion that this was impossible.

Image Source ✱ The White House Historical Association.



The landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in the New World as depicted by Michele Felice Corné

"Some Puritans decided to separate themselves from the Church of England"

Instead, they sought to separate themselves from the Church of England and to establish religious communities of their own that lived by the Biblical principles they espoused. This, however, was difficult in England as under the Act of Uniformity of 1559 it was illegal not to attend a Sunday service at an authorised church, with a fine of one shilling for each missed service. The penalties for conducting unauthorised services were greater and included imprisonment and, since failure to conform to the Church of England was considered seditious, even death.

The accession of James I in 1603 led the Puritans to hope that some of their demands for Church reform would be met but at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 their hopes were largely dashed, save for the king's agreement to an official English-language translation of the Bible, which would bring forth the King James Bible. However, when the Puritans broached their opposition to bishops as non-Biblical, James declared, "No bishop, no king!" and brought discussion sharply to an end.

With hopes of reform dashed for the moment – they came to the fore again during the English Civil War – some Puritans decided to separate themselves entirely from the Church of England and became known as Separatists. But of course, in a society that viewed religious dissent as the fracturing of the body politic and, essentially, treason, separating yourself and your community from the Church of England was a difficult and dangerous task. At least, it was in England. But what about if you separated yourself physically as well as religiously? That is what one group of Puritan Separatists decided to do in 1607. But they didn't move to America. Instead, the group, the core of which came from a congregation that had been based in Nottinghamshire, took ship across the Channel to the Netherlands, eventually settling in the city of Leiden.

But after ten years in Leiden, the group of English Puritans became increasingly dissatisfied with their lives there. Nor were they entirely free from danger: William Brewster, one of the elders of the community, wrote criticising both King James and the Church of England and, in response, the English authorities sent men to Leiden to arrest Brewster. Although he escaped, the presence of agents of the Crown in Leiden bent on arresting one of their number and taking him back to England to stand trial sent chills of presentiment through the community. The Channel was only a few miles wide: not much water to protect them from the King. There were other reasons to think about leaving too. The community was beginning to haemorrhage members while the young were being drawn away into the wider Dutch culture. As Separatists, this cultural assimilation struck at the roots of their identity and beliefs, while there also loomed the possibility of war between Protestant Holland and Catholic Spain. Drawn also to the possibility of spreading the Gospel that animated their lives to those who had not heard it properly preached, some among the congregation began to look further afield, across an ocean rather than a channel: to America.

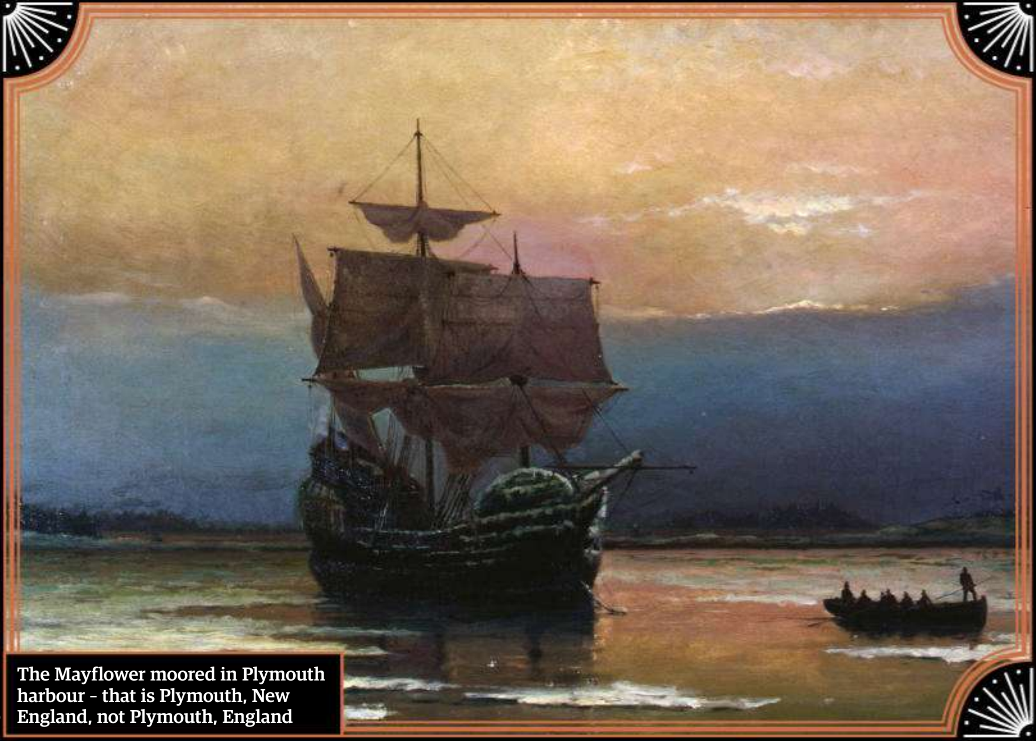

The Mayflower moored in Plymouth harbour - that is Plymouth, New England, not Plymouth, England

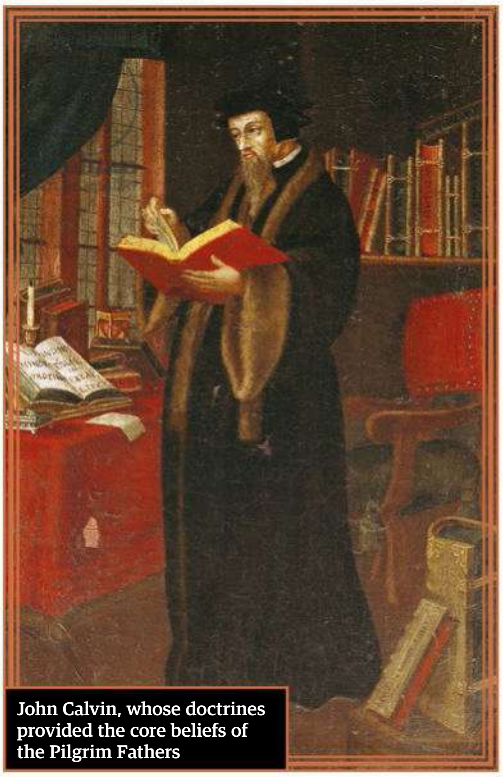
Image Source ✷ The White House Historical Association.

Having applied for and received a land patent from the London Virginia Company, the legal leaseholder of the land they hoped to settle that allowed them to build a colony in the New World, the community – at least those who could afford the voyage – embarked on two ships, the Speedwell and the Mayflower, on 16 September 1620. The Atlantic crossing took two lives – a sailor and a colonist – and began another, a child born mid passage and who was named, appropriately enough, Oceanus.

Before they landed in the New World, the Pilgrims drew up and signed a contract, the Mayflower Compact, to govern the new colony on the basis of "just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices" to which all the members of the colony would be bound and under which issues would be decided by majority voting. This was the foundation of the American principle that government should be by the consent of the people, and it was developed and replicated in further settlements in New England that governed themselves through town meetings in which discussion, reason and majority consent were the fundamental principles of the new society being formed in America.

This contract, that in some ways prefigures the constitution of the United States, was by no means the only way the fledgling colony that was founded in Plymouth was revolutionary. Being the product of Puritans seeking the freedom to worship as their consciences dictated, it was naturally intensely religious, but the Christianity of these newly arrived Americans was different in many ways from the Christianity of the Church of England or the Catholic Church, with consequences that would redound for good and ill down the years.

The Pilgrims were followers of John Calvin, the Reformation theologian who propounded the theory of predestination. This doctrine, based on trying to reconcile God's omniscience with salvation history, taught that God, before even He had made the world, as a result of his foreknowledge of the world, had predestined the elect for salvation while all the rest of humanity would be damned. Only the elect were given the grace to accept faith and there was absolutely nothing you could do about this: it was God's choice, not yours. Nor could you reliably know, even if you had what you believed to be faith, that you were among the elect, although perseverance



John Calvin, whose doctrines provided the core beliefs of the Pilgrim Fathers

Image Source ✱ Unidentified painter.

in following the Puritanism of the Pilgrims at least suggested that you had a chance of salvation.

Although this sounds totally depressing, within the wider view of Calvinisim it's actually rather uplifting, since the first and basic premise of Calvinism is the absolute corruption of humanity as a result of Adam's fall. Not only has original sin rendered our reason so damaged by original sin that we are unable to do what is truly good, but we are so damaged as to be unable even to perceive what that good is. But into this bleak picture comes Christ's saving grace, destined from before the first day to save you - and this salvation is not dependent upon your merits but is the freely given gift of God and you can no more avoid it than you can avoid gravity. If God wills that you be saved, then you will be saved, like it or not. So if you are one of the elect, your salvation is certain. This is because God's grace, given to his elect, is, quite simply, irresistible. As such, the elect will, necessarily, persevere through every trial and tribulation to their final, sublime reward. So, as long as you were one of the elect, everything would work out in the end.

As far as the visible trappings and rituals of religion were concerned, the Pilgrims were determinedly minimalist, finding Biblical warrant only for baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thus the other five of the seven sacraments of the Church of England and the Catholic Church, namely confession, ordination, confirmation, the last rites and even marriage, were regarded as human inventions rather than divine institutions. While the Pilgrims did, of course, marry, they regarded marriage as a civil contract rather than a religious rite. Mindful also of the second commandment against idolatry, their worship and their houses of worship were determinedly plain and simple: not for the Pilgrims stained glass, polyphonic chant, icons and statues: their church was a plain affair without any adornment and the only singing heard within its wooden walls were the Psalms. The first church of the Plymouth colony was in fact the ground floor of the town's fortress, with the first floor housing six cannons and a watchtower. At Sunday services, which ran from 9am to noon and again from 2pm to 5pm, the congregation was divided, with the men and boys over 16 sitting on one side and women and children on the other side. In a further departure from practices in Europe, the men were required to attend church with their firearms in case of sudden danger: failure to do so incurred a fine of 12 pence.

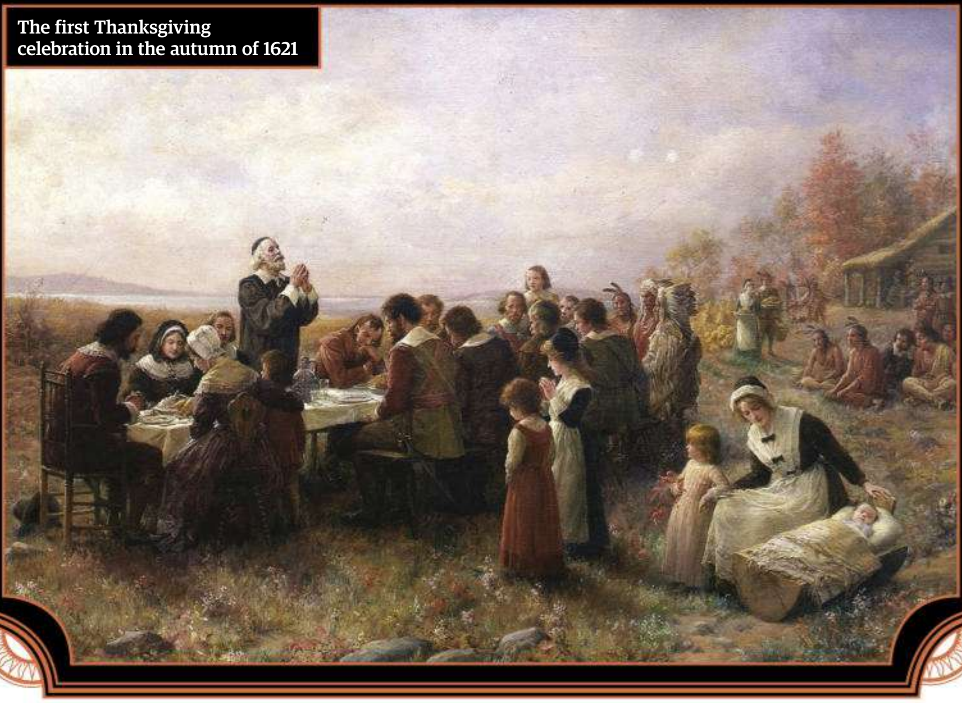
Puritans rejected much of the panoply of religious service in favour of strict, spartan minimalism and austerity

The church of the Pilgrims also rejected the hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church and the Church of England: there were no bishops and certainly no Pope. Instead, there were five offices: pastor, teacher, elder, deacon and deaconesses. Their pastor was not able to make the passage to America, so the Plymouth Colony was ruled by its elder, none other than the same William Brewster who had escaped arrest by the agents of James I in Leiden.

While the Pilgrims observed the Sabbath day of rest strictly, doing no work on Sunday, they viewed the other Christian festivals, even Christmas and Easter, as human memorials rather than Biblically inspired

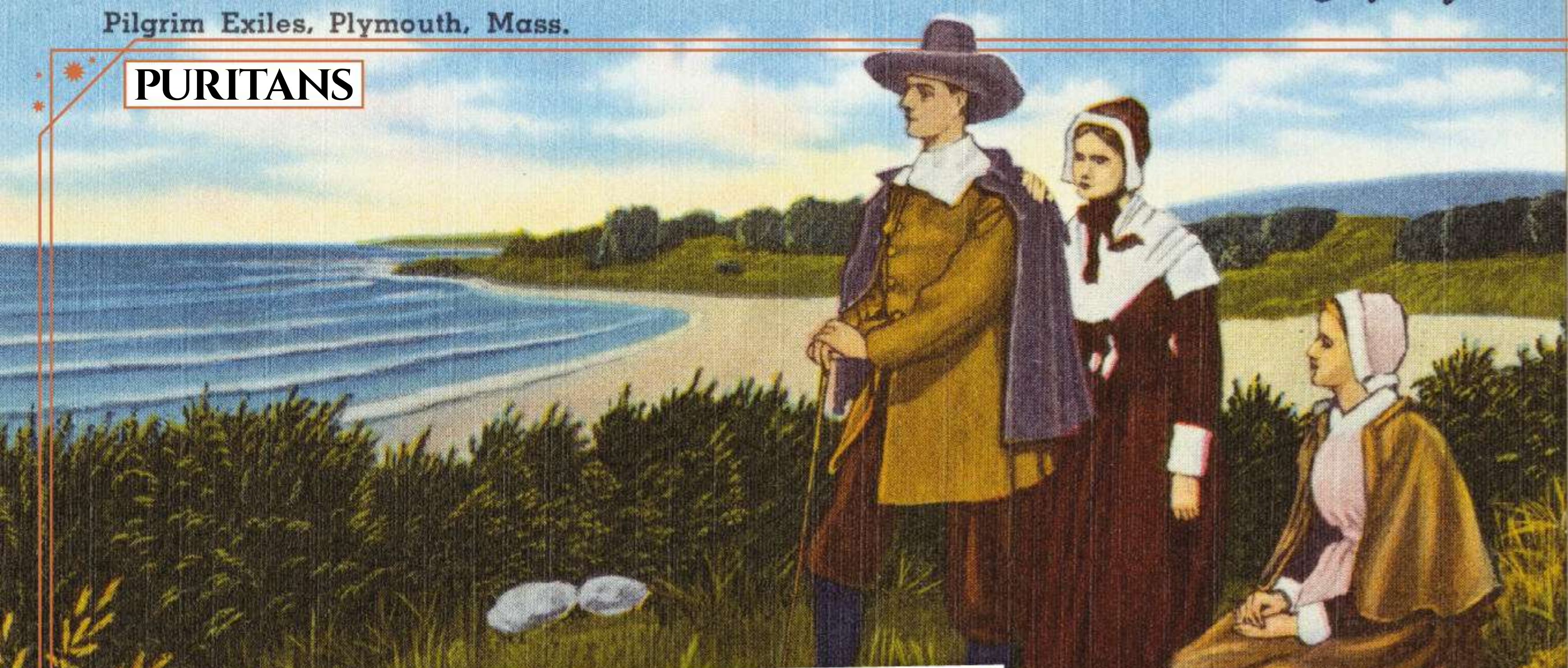
THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

That quintessentially American holiday, Thanksgiving, began with the Plymouth Colony in 1621. Although the exact date is not known, the feast was held between 21 September and 11 November, with 29 September, or Michaelmas, probably the most likely day. The feast was given to 50 surviving colonists and 90 American Indians and was cooked by the four adult women in the colony who had survived the terribly hard first winter in America. It was essentially a classic harvest festival in its first iteration, a thanksgiving for the bounty of this new land after its initial dearth. An eyewitness to this first thanksgiving later wrote: "Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruits of our labor. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted."

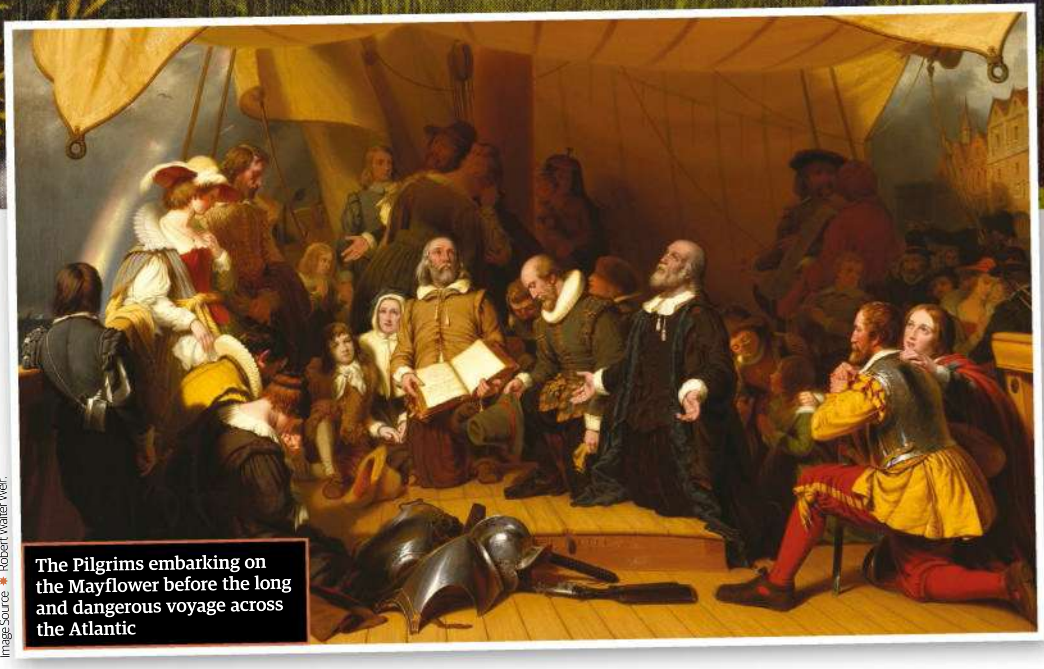


The first Thanksgiving celebration in the autumn of 1621

Image Source ✱ Jennie Augusta Brownscombe.


Pilgrim Exiles, Plymouth, Mass.

Though some Pilgrims left the colonies, many felt that they were stuck there once they arrived



The Pilgrims embarking on the Mayflower before the long and dangerous voyage across the Atlantic

Image Source * Robert Walter Weir.

Image Source * Smith&#039;s Inc, Tichnor Bros. Inc, Boston, Mass.

and so did not keep them. Indeed, it was because of his strictures against keeping the two festivals in his book *Perth Assembly* that William Brewster attracted the attentions of James I. But while the Pilgrims did not keep Christian festivals, they did have Days of Thanksgiving and Days of Fasting and Humiliation, the former in response to prayers and blessings received (and a custom that has gone on to become one of the most beloved of American national holidays), the latter called when the community faced some intractable problem that it could not see a way through to solving.

It was a religion of a tightly focused but restricted nature, that produced people of like kind and as such was well suited to the rigours of founding and developing a colony on the other side of the world.

With the success of this first Puritan colony in the New World, others followed, with a fresh group of settlers arriving in 1628 setting up first the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and then later the New Haven Colony and Rhode Island. Unlike the Plymouth community, the Puritans who arrived in the second wave of colonists to New England were not Separatists but rather sought to bring about a reformation of Protestantism through the example of the society they sought to create, "a city upon a hill" whose light would shine out and illuminate the world. Indeed, the charter that set out the community aims and requirements of the Massachusetts Bay Colony asked its people to be "soe religiously, peaceablie, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversacon, maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Saulor of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth".

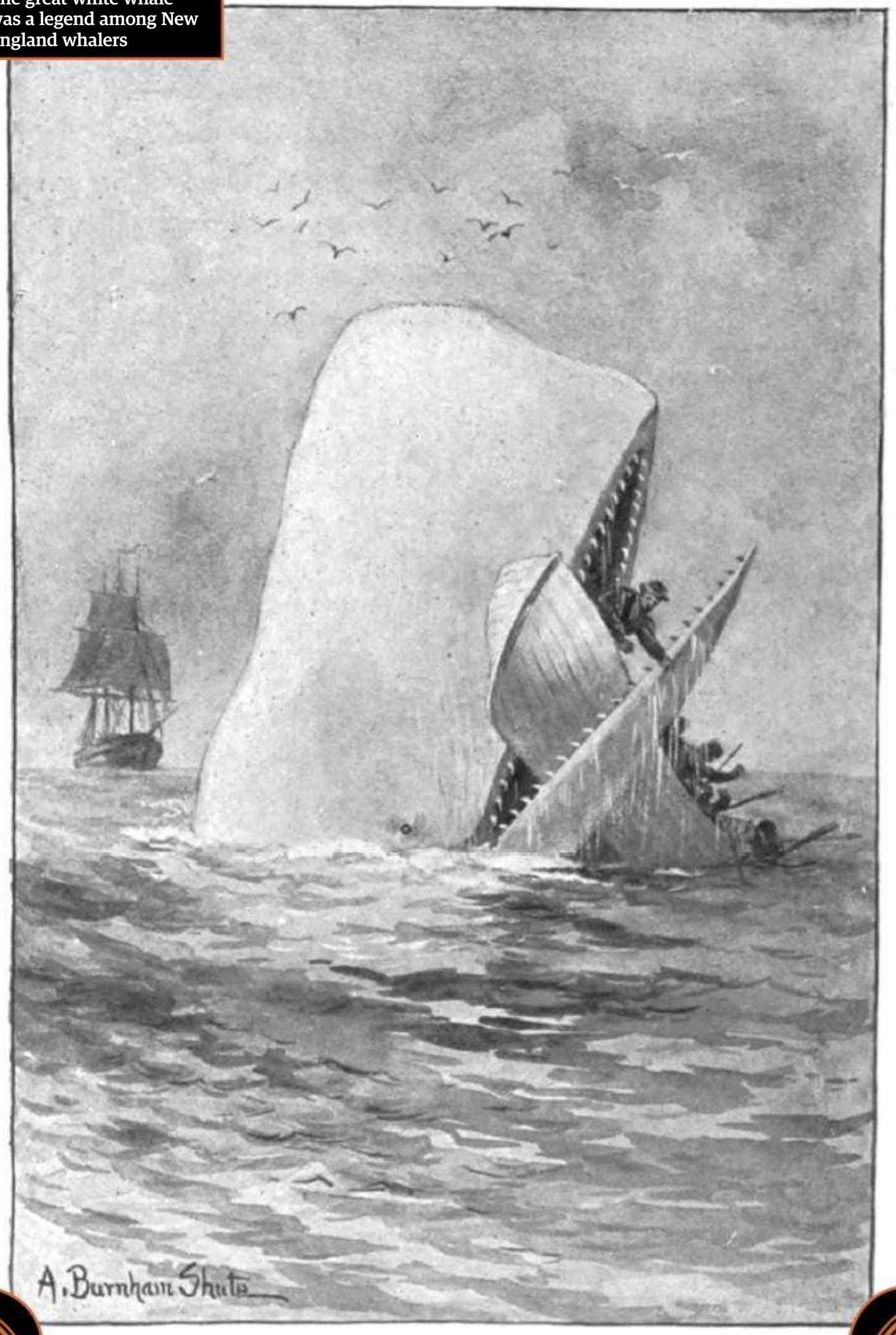
Ironically, the Pilgrims, who fled religious regulation, imposed much stricter laws in their own colonies in the New World

With a faith that was based on sola scriptura, the ability to actually read the scriptures was fundamental: thus literacy was highly valued in the New England colonies, and widely taught.

While on the face of it, it would seem that the non-Separatist Massachusetts Bay Colony would be more tolerant than the Separatist Plymouth Colony, in fact the opposite was the case. So when the second English congregation in America gathered for worship in Salem in 1629, a group of the Plymouth congregation made what was a difficult and dangerous trip to "extend the right hand of fellowship, wishing all prosperity and a blessed success unto such good beginnings" even though this congregation was officially Anglican (although of a Puritan bent). In fact, the Plymouth community was willing to join the worship of the Puritan churches elsewhere in New England. However, there were limits to toleration, and the Quakers who started arriving in New England in the 1650s and 1660s soon reached and went past those limits: the Massachusetts Bay Colony whipped, banished and hung Quakers, the more tolerant Plymouth Colony fined, whipped and banished them, but didn't hang them. The Plymouth Colony slowly codified in law its religious and moral outlook, passing beyond the practices of censure (public remonstrance for bad behaviour) and excommunication (being expelled from the church), that had sufficed for social control in the

FUR AND THE PLYMOUTH COLONY

The Plymouth Colony was set up as a commercial venture with its investors expecting and hoping for a return on their considerable capital. But the colony was never very profitable (the Massachusetts Bay Colony, with the excellent harbour at Boston at its heart, would prove much more profitable and eventually absorb the Plymouth establishment) but it was saved from economic failure by fur. Beaver fur to be precise. The local Native Americans, with whom the Plymouth Colony had excellent relations, had hunted beaver for generations. Now they had a new market and the Plymouth colonists had a source of a valuable commoditiy that they could sell on: being low volume and high value, furs were an ideal item for long-distance trade. Beaver pelts paid for the colony through until the 1650s, when the beaver paid the price for the colony's expansion by almost being killed off in the area. Whaling proved a lucrative alternative and the Pilgrims became early whalers: it was from the New England port of New Bedord, Massachusetts that Ishmael took ship on the Pequod with Captain Ahab in his fatal hunt for Moby Dick.



The great white whale was a legend among New England whalers

Image Source ✷ Augustus Burnham Shute.

early years of the colony until, by 1650, it became a legal offense to slander a church or a minister. Attending church on Sunday also became a legal requirement, while breaking the Sabbath would incur either a fine or a whipping. The gradual fusion of moral strictures and law would provide one of the foundations for the later witch persecutions in Salem.

The belief in witchcraft and the presence of the Devil, that in the medieval period had been limited and easily banished through the power of the still unified Church, had grown exponentially during the Renaissance and into the 17th century. Where before magic had been an aspect of tales of elves and fairies, in the 17th century witches and sorcerors were thought likely to be living in the next street - it's no accident that Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, a play about a wizard who sells his soul to the Devil, was written at the end of the 16th century. Indeed, King James I himself wrote one of the key texts on sorcery, *Daemonologie*, in 1597. So all the best and brightest minds of the age believed in the possibility of witchcraft - some of them, indeed, such as John Dee, advisor to Queen Elizabeth and one of the most learned men of his time, tried to summon and speak with the spirits of the middle air. It was therefore no surprise that, in the haunted and strange woods of their New World, the Puritan colonists saw the actions of supernatural spirits and demons as being widespread. In particular, disasters and calamities were ascribed to Satan's agency, as the wicked one sought to prevent the forming of their "city upon a hill" (the allusion is to Jerusalem, a city similarly placed upon a hill and a light to the nations).

> "In the 17th century, witches were thought likely to be living in the next street"

With the universal belief in witchcraft coupled with laws that sought to impose belief by law, some of the elements were coming in to place for the witch trials in Salem. It's notable, however, that while witchcraft was a capital crime in Plymouth, there were no convictions for witchcraft there. Only two women were ever accused, with the case against the first woman in 1661, Goodwife Holmes, not going to trial while the second, of Mary Ingram in 1677, saw her tried and acquitted. The conditions at Salem partook of the wider context in New England, but were also, fatally, particular to the area and the people who lived there.

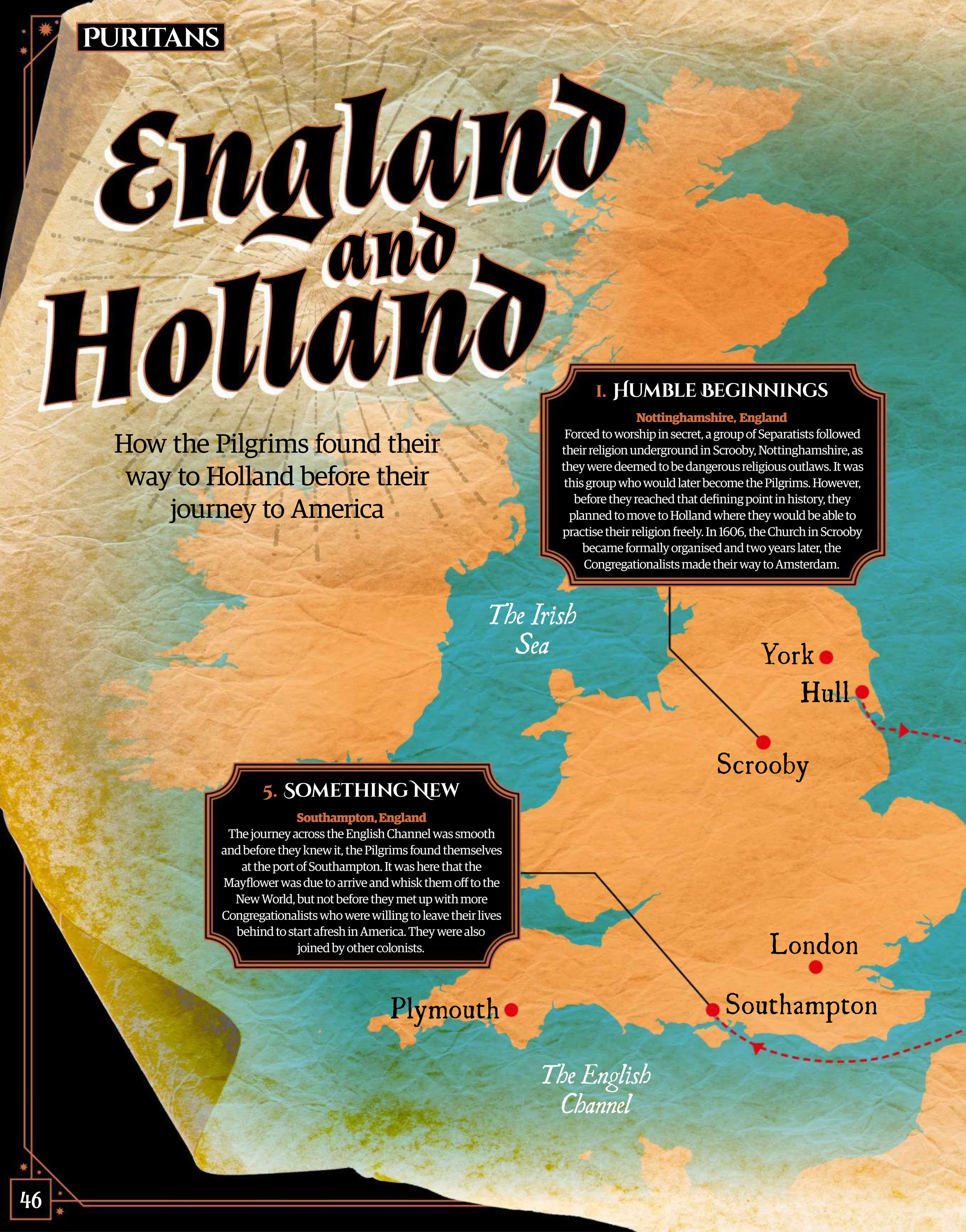
England and Holland

How the Pilgrims found their way to Holland before their journey to America

1. HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Nottinghamshire, England

Forced to worship in secret, a group of Separatists followed their religion underground in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, as they were deemed to be dangerous religious outlaws. It was this group who would later become the Pilgrims. However, before they reached that defining point in history, they planned to move to Holland where they would be able to practise their religion freely. In 1606, the Church in Scrooby became formally organised and two years later, the Congregationalists made their way to Amsterdam.



5. SOMETHING NEW

Southampton, England

The journey across the English Channel was smooth and before they knew it, the Pilgrims found themselves at the port of Southampton. It was here that the Mayflower was due to arrive and whisk them off to the New World, but not before they met up with more Congregationalists who were willing to leave their lives behind to start afresh in America. They were also joined by other colonists.

N
E
S
W
The North Sea
Amsterdam
Leiden
Rotterdam

2. GOING OVERSEAS

Amsterdam, Netherlands

The first stop for the Separatists in Holland was the capital, Amsterdam, although they didn't stay there long. The congregation that they joined in the city had been embroiled in scandals and controversies since their arrival in the mid-1590s. Further problems lay ahead – while the different Separatist congregations in Amsterdam initially worked together and followed the same ideals, over the months they began to move apart. Finally, in early 1609, the future Pilgrims decided it was time for them to move on and they made an agreement to settle in the Dutch city of Leiden.

3. MOVING ON

Leiden, Netherlands

It was in Leiden where the Pilgrims made their home for 12 years and it was chosen with good reasoning – it was a free-thinking city that was known for its religious tolerance. But it wasn't all smooth sailing for the Separatists and their economic outlook was bleak. Because they weren't technically citizens of Leiden, they were only able to take low-paying jobs like hard labour, which caused many of them to die young. What didn't help was that their children wanted to assimilate into Dutch culture. Eventually, a decision was made – they would return to England and then sail to America.

4. HEADING HOME

Rotterdam, Netherlands

On 22 July 1620, 35 Pilgrims made their way to Delfshaven in Rotterdam, a journey that would lead to so much more, although they sadly had to leave most of their friends behind. They had all sold their personal belongings to buy the Speedwell, the ship that would take them back across the Channel to England. After spending the night in Delfshaven, it was time to say goodbye to their Dutch life and they weighed anchor, ready to start on something new.

Image Source • Getty Images

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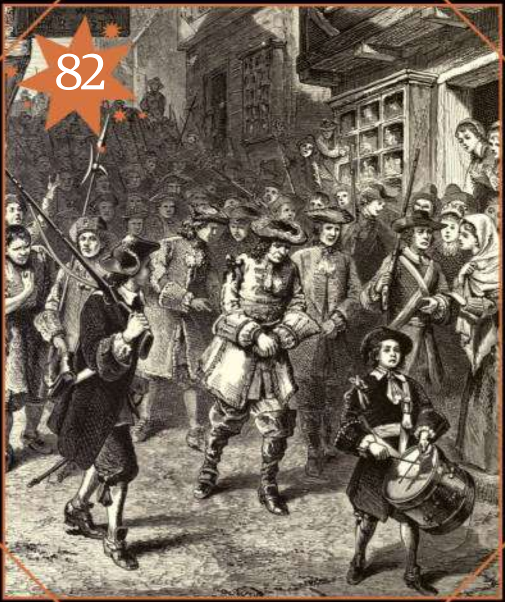
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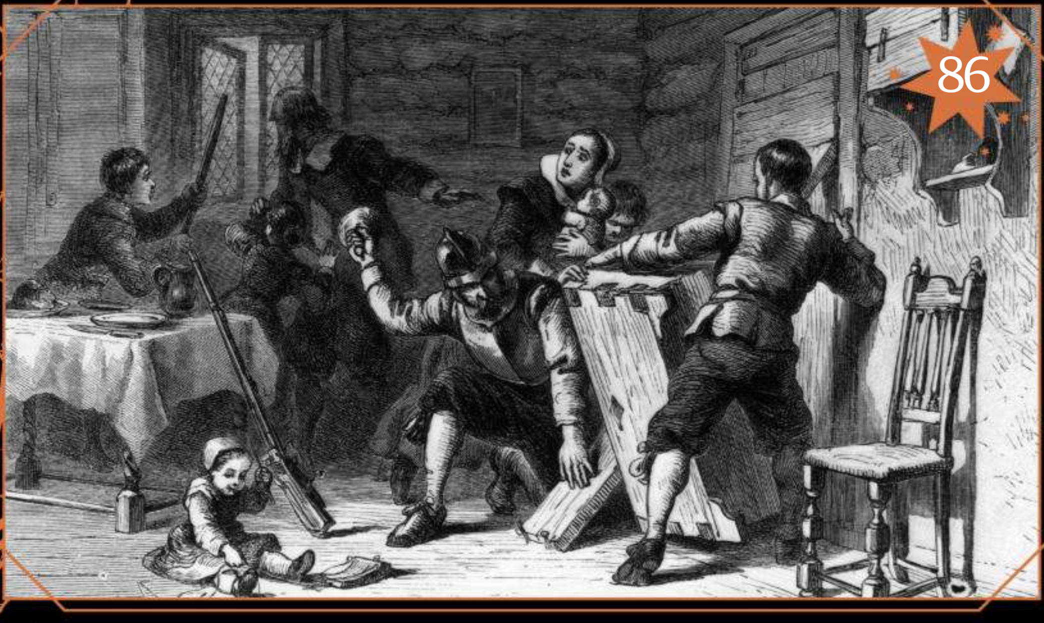
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Pilgrims

With Puritanism under attack, its adherents set out for the New World and a utopian new Jerusalem...

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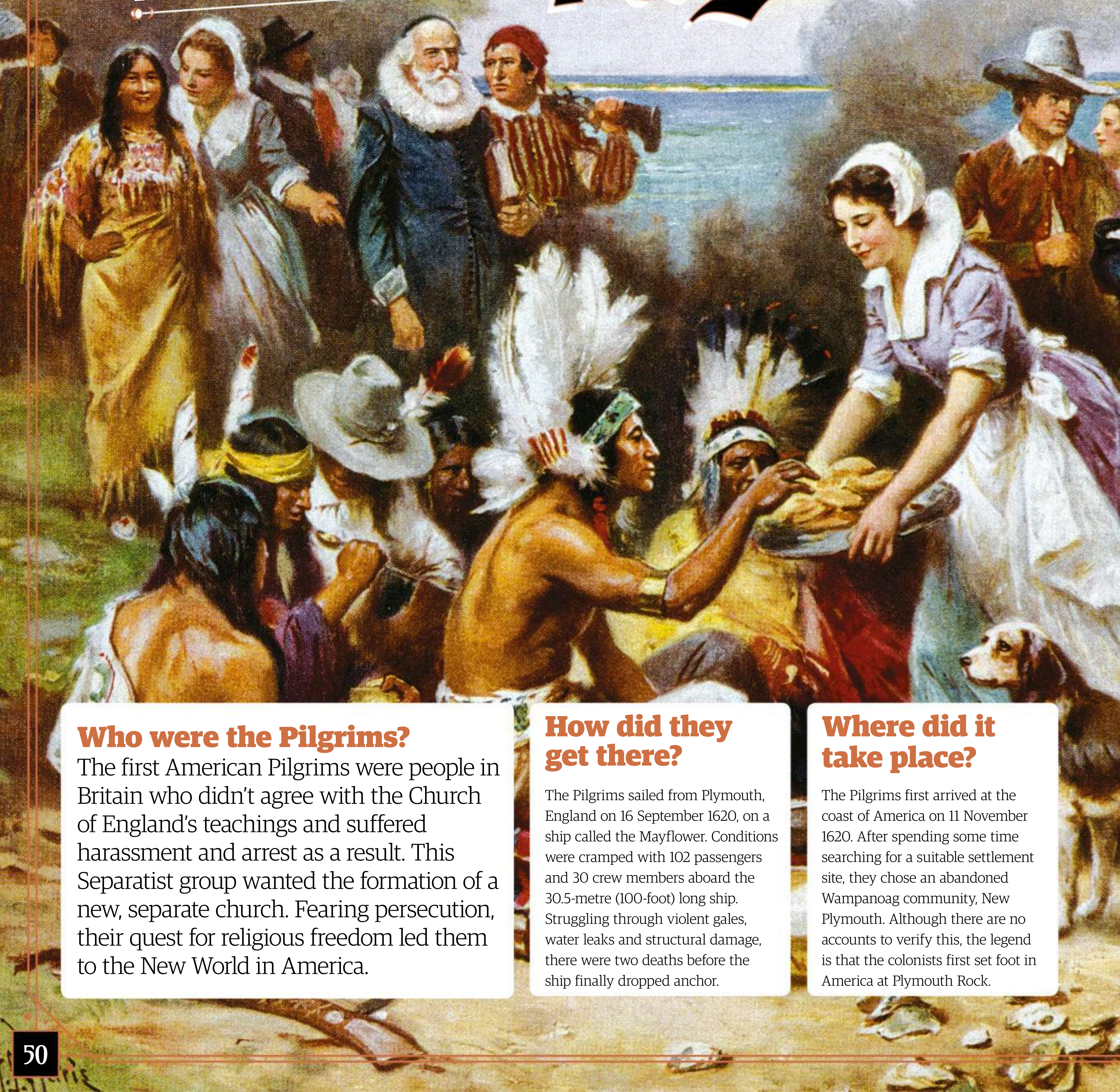
The first American Pilgrims

PLYMOUTH COLONY, 1620-1691



Who were the Pilgrims?

The first American Pilgrims were people in Britain who didn't agree with the Church of England's teachings and suffered harassment and arrest as a result. This Separatist group wanted the formation of a new, separate church. Fearing persecution, their quest for religious freedom led them to the New World in America.

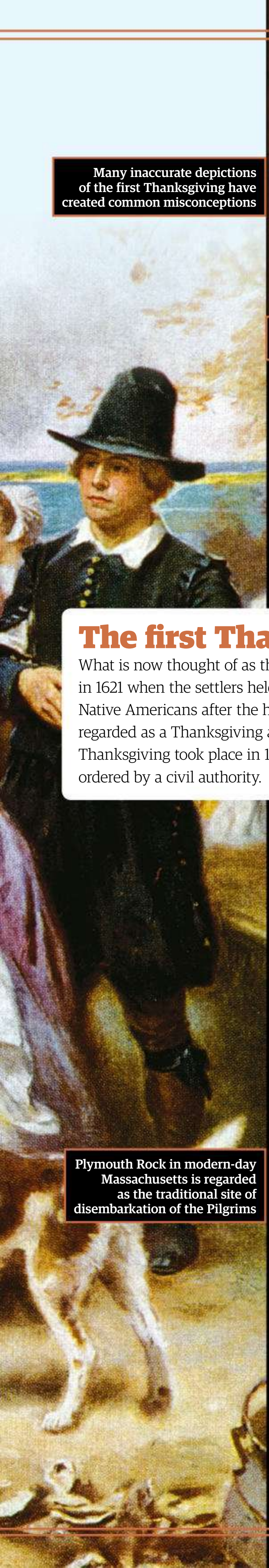
How did they get there?

The Pilgrims sailed from Plymouth, England on 16 September 1620, on a ship called the Mayflower. Conditions were cramped with 102 passengers and 30 crew members aboard the 30.5-metre (100-foot) long ship. Struggling through violent gales, water leaks and structural damage, there were two deaths before the ship finally dropped anchor.

Where did it take place?

The Pilgrims first arrived at the coast of America on 11 November 1620. After spending some time searching for a suitable settlement site, they chose an abandoned Wampanoag community, New Plymouth. Although there are no accounts to verify this, the legend is that the colonists first set foot in America at Plymouth Rock.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PILGRIMS



Many inaccurate depictions of the first Thanksgiving have created common misconceptions

Plymouth Rock in modern-day Massachusetts is regarded as the traditional site of disembarkation of the Pilgrims

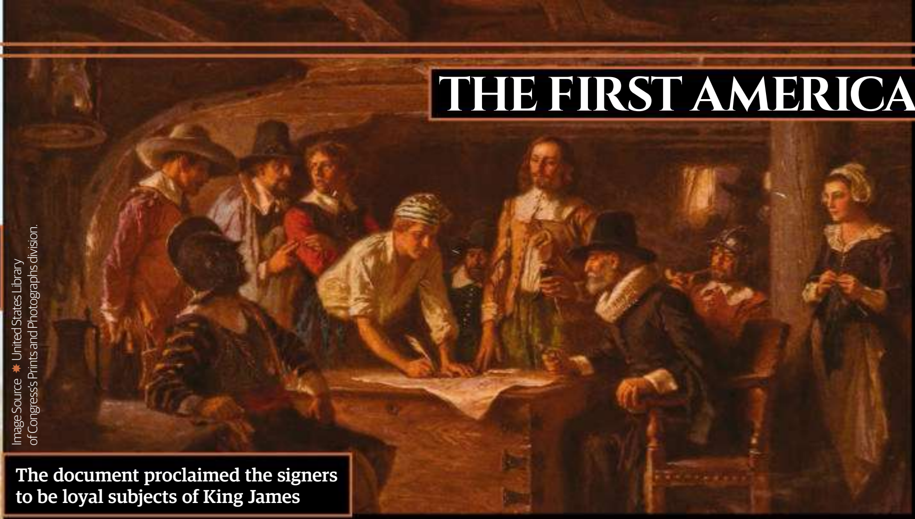


Image Source ✱ United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division.

The document proclaimed the signers to be loyal subjects of King James

The birth of American democracy

In order to maintain control, the colonists decided to establish a government. This led to the birth of the Mayflower Compact, in which the 41 signers agreed to pass 'just and equal laws.' Although it was a far cry from the Declaration of Independence, it was the first time the idea of self-government was expressed in the New World.

The first Thanksgiving

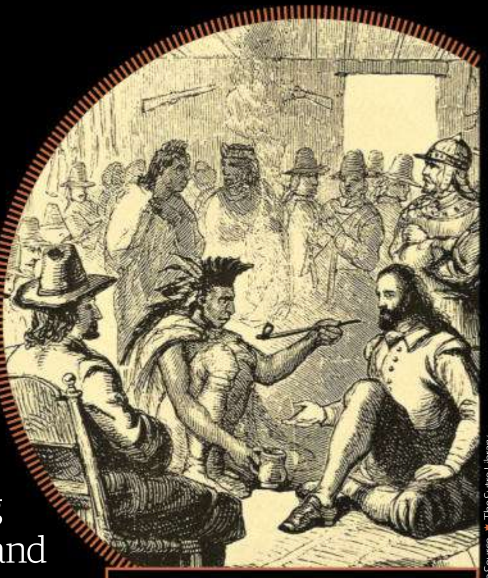
What is now thought of as the first Thanksgiving occurred in 1621 when the settlers held a feast with the local Native Americans after the harvest. However, this wasn't regarded as a Thanksgiving at the time, and the first true Thanksgiving took place in 1623 when the celebration was ordered by a civil authority.

A brutal winter

The first winter proved disastrous for the Pilgrims. They struggled to build suitable shelter in time and suffered from a host of diseases such as scurvy. Out of the 102 immigrants who landed, 45 died in the first winter and were buried on Cole's Hill. As a result, only seven homes were built, rather than the planned 19.

Native help

The Pilgrims were helped greatly in their survival by local Native Americans. A Native American arranged a meeting with the leader of the region - Massasoit. After a peace agreement was reached, Massasoit and his people aided the settlers, teaching them how to grow maize and serving as translators.



Main Image Source ✱ The Sutro Library.

The half century of peace enjoyed under Massasoit collapsed after his death

Growth of a colony

As time went on, more and more settlers travelled to Plymouth to start new lives. One year after the first Pilgrims arrived, a ship called The Fortune carried 37 new settlers. This was followed by the Anne and Little James with 96 more. By the time of the colony's dissolution in 1691, it was home to an estimated 7,000 residents.

Pilgrims in Holland

Some of the leaders of the Pilgrims were based in Holland, where they had moved to from England to experience religious freedom. However, they struggled to make a living, worried they were losing their English identities and also that their religious freedom would not last. They decided to leave for the New World.

KEY FIGURES

John Carver

1576-1621

A Leiden separatist who helped organise the Mayflower's voyage and served as the first governor of the colony.

Massasoit

1581-1661

The leader of the Wampanoag tribe who formed political ties with the settlers and prevented the failure of the colony.

Christopher Jones

1570-1622

The captain of the Mayflower, Jones sailed the ship through gales to finally reach Plymouth.

Squanto

1585-1622

A Native American who assisted the first Pilgrims, ensuring their survival. Squanto also served as a guide and translator.

Myles Standish

1584-1656

The military leader of the Plymouth Colony, Standish organised the defensive layout of the settlement.

MAJOR EVENTS

The Mayflower sails

16 September 1620

The Mayflower departs from Plymouth, England carrying 102 passengers bound for the shores of America.

The start of American democracy

11 November 1620

The Mayflower Compact is signed by 41 passengers, agreeing the colony will be governed by "just and equal laws."

Venturing forth

16 December 1620

Mayflower lands at Plymouth harbour. They spend three days looking for a suitable settlement site and decide on Patuxet.

Making peace with the locals

22 March 1621

Massasoit and the Pilgrims exchange gifts and establish a formal treaty of peace.

First Thanksgiving

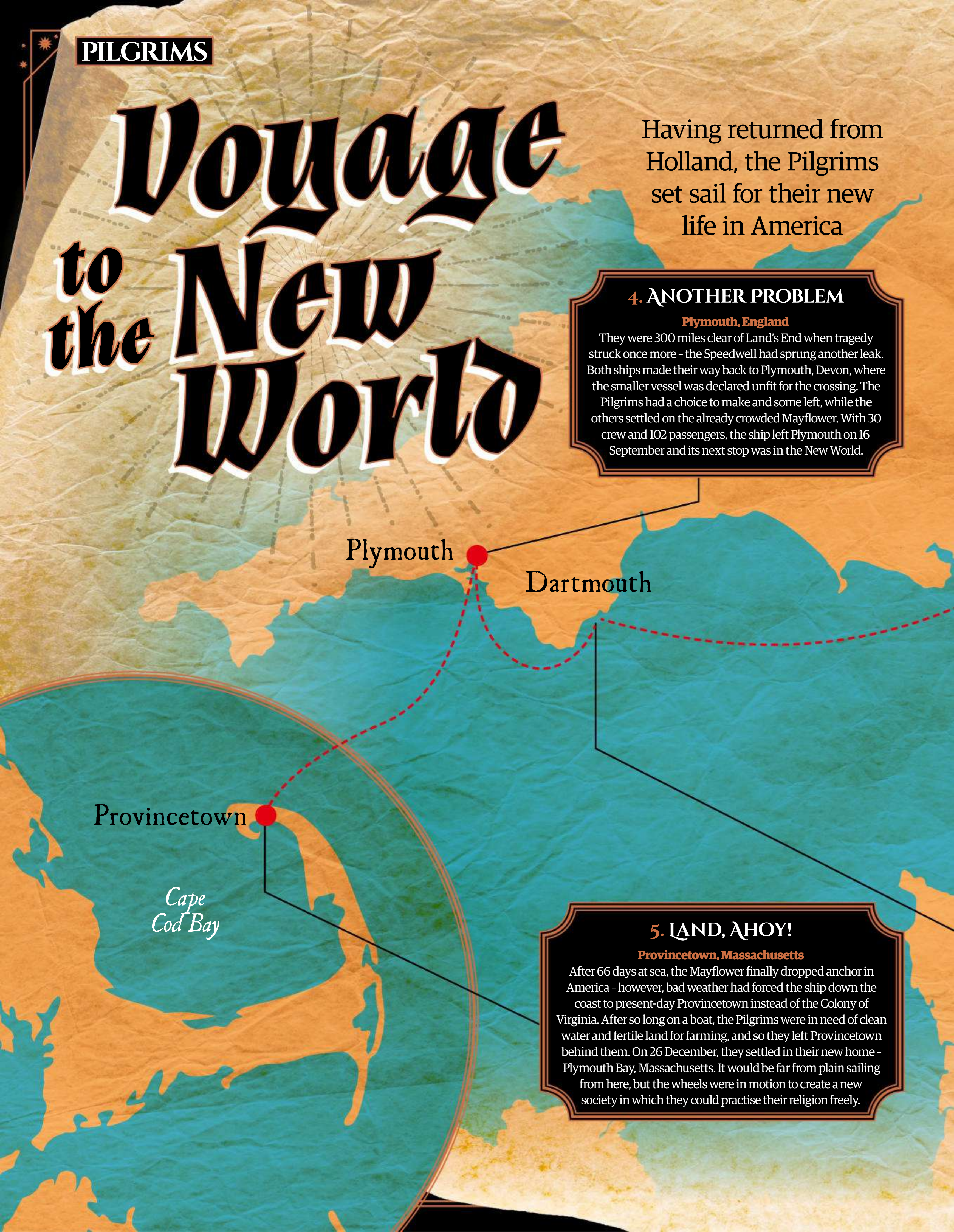
October 1921

The Pilgrims and Massasoit celebrate with a feast for three days after their first harvest.

Main Image Source ✱ United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division.

Voyage to the New World

Having returned from Holland, the Pilgrims set sail for their new life in America



4. ANOTHER PROBLEM

Plymouth, England

They were 300 miles clear of Land's End when tragedy struck once more – the Speedwell had sprung another leak. Both ships made their way back to Plymouth, Devon, where the smaller vessel was declared unfit for the crossing. The Pilgrims had a choice to make and some left, while the others settled on the already crowded Mayflower. With 30 crew and 102 passengers, the ship left Plymouth on 16 September and its next stop was in the New World.

5. LAND, AHOY!

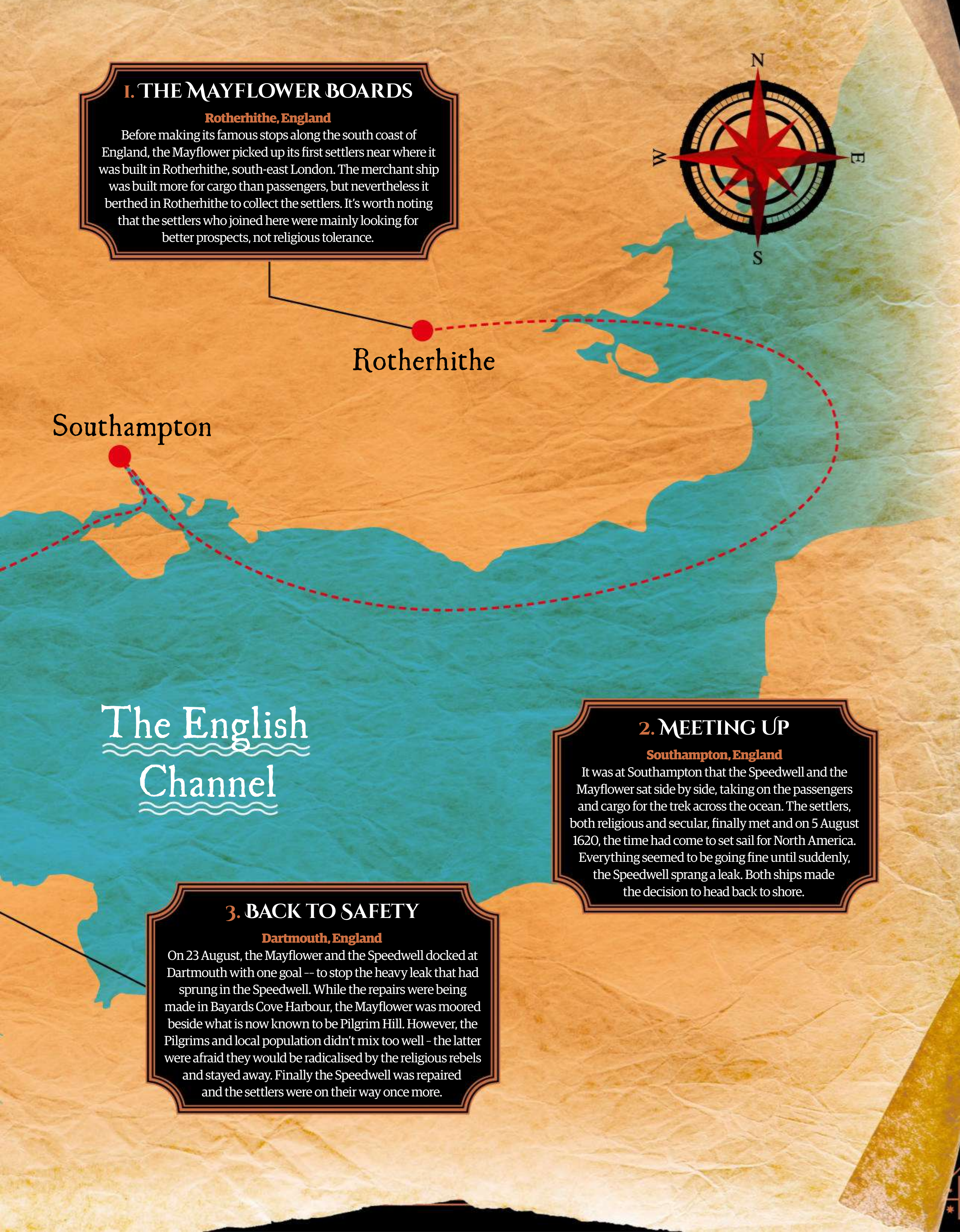
Provincetown, Massachusetts

After 66 days at sea, the Mayflower finally dropped anchor in America – however, bad weather had forced the ship down the coast to present-day Provincetown instead of the Colony of Virginia. After so long on a boat, the Pilgrims were in need of clean water and fertile land for farming, and so they left Provincetown behind them. On 26 December, they settled in their new home – Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts. It would be far from plain sailing from here, but the wheels were in motion to create a new society in which they could practise their religion freely.

1. THE MAYFLOWER BOARDS

Rotherhithe, England

Before making its famous stops along the south coast of England, the Mayflower picked up its first settlers near where it was built in Rotherhithe, south-east London. The merchant ship was built more for cargo than passengers, but nevertheless it berthed in Rotherhithe to collect the settlers. It's worth noting that the settlers who joined here were mainly looking for better prospects, not religious tolerance.



2. MEETING UP

Southampton, England

It was at Southampton that the Speedwell and the Mayflower sat side by side, taking on the passengers and cargo for the trek across the ocean. The settlers, both religious and secular, finally met and on 5 August 1620, the time had come to set sail for North America. Everything seemed to be going fine until suddenly, the Speedwell sprang a leak. Both ships made the decision to head back to shore.

3. BACK TO SAFETY

Dartmouth, England

On 23 August, the Mayflower and the Speedwell docked at Dartmouth with one goal -- to stop the heavy leak that had sprung in the Speedwell. While the repairs were being made in Bayards Cove Harbour, the Mayflower was moored beside what is now known to be Pilgrim Hill. However, the Pilgrims and local population didn't mix too well - the latter were afraid they would be radicalised by the religious rebels and stayed away. Finally the Speedwell was repaired and the settlers were on their way once more.

The voyage of the Mayflower

A disastrous start gave way to a 66-day ordeal of sickness, catastrophe and conflict. Discover how the Mayflower sailed out of the storm and into legend

Written by James Hoare

The Mayflower was a typical Dutch-style merchant fluyt. Short, at only 100-feet long, and squat due to inelegant superstructure fore and aft to protect its crew and cargo from the elements, 14 cannon of varying size and power also stood primed to shield them from any man-made threat.

It looks somewhat fussy and top-heavy, but the fluyt made the Netherlands a mercantile superpower. It was capable of carrying more cargo and being operated by fewer hands than precious trade vessels, and the design was quickly adopted by the English. High masts made them faster, while their pear-shaped bows (when viewed from the front) enabled them to traverse shallower rivers and coastal waters than galleons could.

It was the perfect ship for the age of exploration and empire, and for a band of religious refuseniks looking to establish a new life in the New World.

> The unique outlook of the Mayflower Pilgrims informed the attitudes that led to Salem's repressive society 72 years later

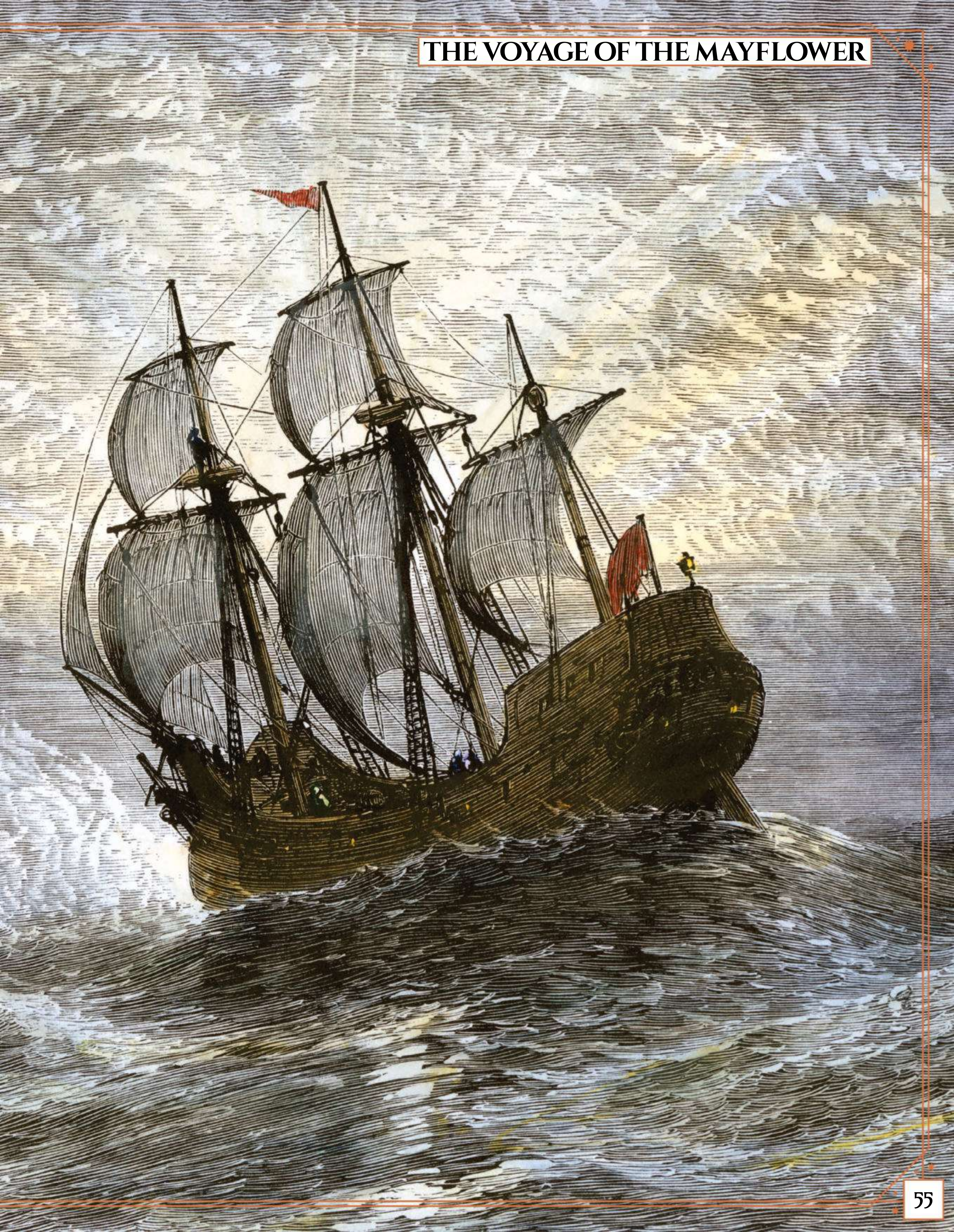
Rated at 180 tons (meaning it could carry 180 casks – or tuns – of wine), the Mayflower carried all the tools deemed vital to the raising of a colony, from weapons and gunpowder to grinding stones and saws, to cooking utensils and locks for doors yet unfashioned on houses still to be built. Though passengers' journals note two dogs – a spaniel and a mastiff – there's no record of any livestock, although they might have brought chickens with them.

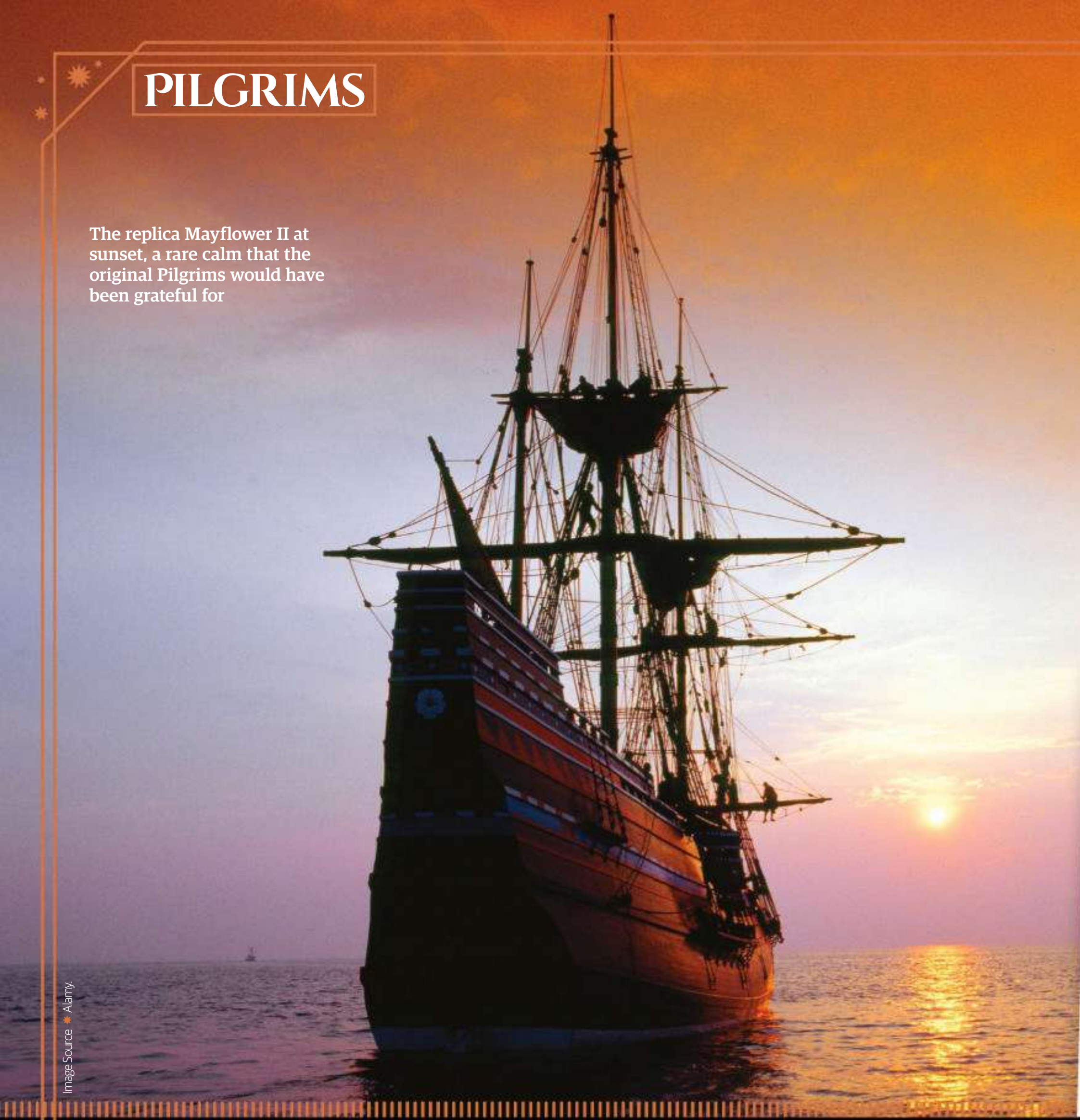
The Mayflower's master at the time – 50-year-old Christopher Jones – had spent the last 11 years tacking back and forth across the Channel, taking French wine north and English woollens south. Aside from a brief trip to Norway with a mixed cargo of trade goods, and possibly a whaling expedition to Greenland, he had little experience of treacherous open seas.

In that he looked to his first mate, Robert Coppin, who claimed to have sailed to New England, and his pilot, John Clark, who had taken cattle to

The Mayflower at sea

Image Source ✱ NASA.





The replica Mayflower II at sunset, a rare calm that the original Pilgrims would have been grateful for

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

> ““On 6 September 1620, the Mayflower made its third and final departure from England on ‘a prosperous wind’”

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

Virginia in 1611 and 1618, and was once hauled to Cuba as a prisoner of the Spanish.

The drama with the Speedwell had seen patience and provisions both sorely tested, and after nearly a month on board within sight of the land they were trying to escape, the mood had turned malodorous. Some Pilgrims had already given up their places and limped home, despite the efforts of the hard-headed governor Christopher Martin.

A further challenge to morale came from the clash of cultures. The Speedwell mainly carried families of Separatists from Leiden, whereas the Mayflower carried prospective fur-trappers from the London Company of Adventurers, whom the Pilgrims called ‘Strangers’. Both bands of passengers – one set driven by economic opportunity and the other set by religious fervour – had kept mostly to their selves in the preceding month, but now these motley 102 souls were forced into close proximity.

Wary of potential conflict, the congregation’s pastor, John Robinson, urged patience and co-operation. This was no small ask, given that his followers were chiefly defined by their sense of self-righteousness, self-imposed exclusion, and God-given exceptionalism, which they believed set themselves apart from the great heathen unwashed of the rest of the world.

On 6 September 1620, the Mayflower made its third and final departure from England on “a prosperous wind.” It was a wind that the Pilgrims soon came to despise. Almost immediately, the passengers began to suffer seasickness. Few had travelled extensively, knew what their voyage entailed or had a decent enough grasp of geography to know where they were headed. The majority bedded down on the gun deck (or ‘tween deck’ as it lay between the exposed upper deck and the cargo hold), erecting crude partitions to turn it into a shanty of makeshift cabins. Sitting beneath the dripping boards as the ship creaked and rolled in dim lantern light, they would probably have been absolutely terrified.

In the timeless tradition of veteran seafarers everywhere, the crew had their fun with these queasy novices. The Yorkshire Separatist William Bradford wrote in his memoir *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*:

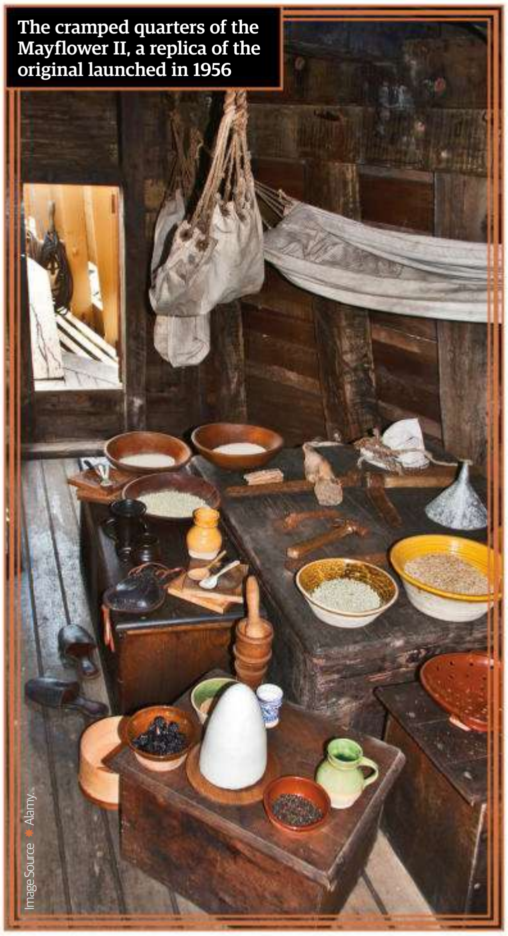
“There was a proud and very profane young man, one of the seamen, of a lusty, able body, which made him the more haughty; he would always be contemning [an archaic word meaning to treat contemptuously] the poor people in their sickness, and cursing them daily with grievous execrations, and did not let to tell them, that he hoped to help cast half of them overboard before they came to their journey’s end, and to make merry with what they had.”

The righteous were afforded some measure of smug satisfaction when this particular not-so-ancient mariner became one of the voyage’s two fatalities (the second being the indentured servant William Butten):

“It pleased God before they came half seas over,” recalled Bradford in his memoir, “to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head.”

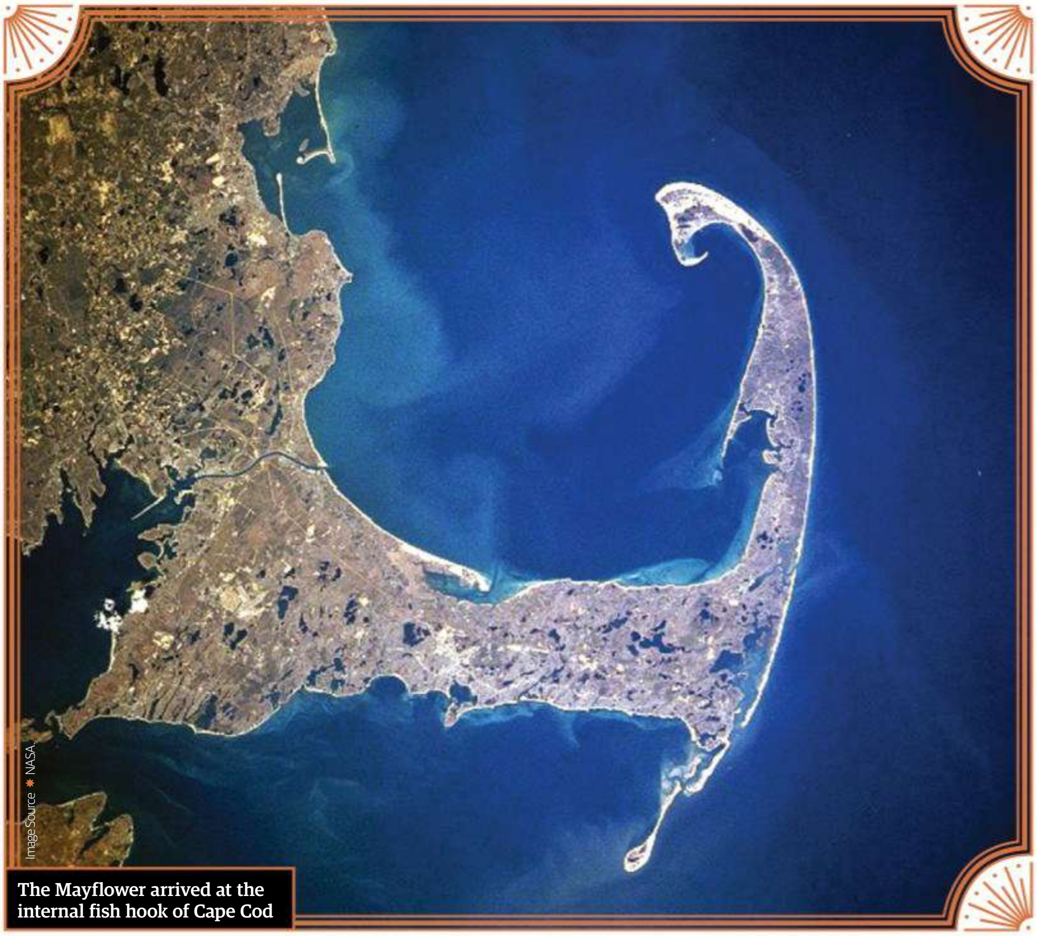
Hammered by western gales that flung the ship so violently that leaks had to be desperately plugged, a main beam cracked and threatened to break, and crewmen feared being swept into the roaring Atlantic, Jones had the Mayflower ‘lie ahull’. The sails were furled, everything on deck was tied down, and the ship was trusted to the tide, which gently turned it leeward to bob relatively gently amid the squall.

So deceptively tranquil did it now appear below decks that the indentured servant John Howard, sick of heaving up his guts in the gloom, elected to take in the sea air. Ambushed by the sudden pitch of the Mayflower in the gale, Howard was flung over the rail and would have been lost to the cold



The cramped quarters of the Mayflower II, a replica of the original launched in 1956

Image Source ✱ Alamy



The Mayflower arrived at the internal fish hook of Cape Cod

Image Source ✱ NASA

“Jones sailed carefully, tracking the depth with a weighted line and following the long, sandy shore”

depths had his hands not found the topsail halyard - the rope used to raise and lower the topsail - trailing in the water. With the manic strength of someone determined to live, Howard clung to the rope even as it dragged him ten feet or more below the waves, until he was pulled back on board.

Nonetheless, the raging storm caused some dissent among the crew. Now over halfway into their voyage, some felt they had earned enough to turn back, rather than gamble on the full payment and die a watery death. In the end, Jones held firm, and assured them of their safety.

“In examining of all opinions,” wrote Bradford, “the master and others affirmed they knew the ship to be strong and firm underwater; and for the buckling of the main beam, there was a great iron screw the passengers brought out of Holland, which would raise the beam into its place; which was done. The carpenter and master affirmed that with a post put under it, set firm in the lower deck, and other ways bound, he would make it sufficient. And as for the decks and upper works they would caulk [seal] them as well as they could, and though with the working of the ship they would not long hold firm, they would be safe as long as they did not over-stress her with sails.”

The plan had been to land in Northern Virginia, which at that time extended north as far as the Hudson River, but after duelling both the Westerlies and the Gulf Stream - both unknown to mariners in the 17th century, but both contributing to the two-month passage by reducing the Mayflower’s speed to an average of two knots (two miles per hour) - they were wide of their course. With only rudimentary means of navigation - a compass and a cross stick, which calculated north-south positions alone - Jones was unsure just how far they had wandered.

Disease was skittering between the decks like a rat, festering in the damp, confined quarters for lack of fresh produce and decent sanitation. Jones knew they had to put ashore soon. Finally sighting land on 9 November after 65 days at sea, the passengers clustered on the upper deck to blink in woozy wonder at the shoreline of the Cape Cod peninsula.

“The appearance of it much comforted us,” wrote Bradford, “especially seeing so goodly a land, and wooded to the brink of the sea. It caused us to rejoice together, and praise God that had given us once again to see land.”

With no charts in his possession that showed the waters south of Cape Cod, Jones sailed carefully, tracking the depth with a weighted line and following the long, sandy shore. With the wind finally at their back and ushering them onwards, the ship’s master was hopeful of making good time to the mouth of the Hudson.

At around 1pm, as they reached the southernmost tip of Cape Cod, the tide began to turn against them, the wind dropped and the water with it, leaving the Mayflower at the mercy of the treacherous Pollock Rip. A shifting maze of sand, shoals and shipwrecks between Cape Cod and Nantucket Island, it looked as though they would have to spend the night embraced in its “dangerous shoals and roaring breakers,” until at last, just as the Sun began to set, the wind finally began to pick up in the south.

Mayflower

Discover what life was like on board the ship that took the Pilgrim Fathers to America

The Mayflower is one of the most famous ships associated with English maritime history. After successfully transporting the Pilgrim Fathers to a new life in America during 1620, the Mayflower was often regarded as a symbol of religious freedom in the United States. Originally, however, it was a simple cargo ship that was used for the transportation of mundane goods – namely timber, clothing and wine. While statistical details of the ship have sadly been lost, when scholars look at other merchant ships of this period, they estimate that it might have weighed up to 182,000 kilograms. It is suggested that the ship would have been around seven metres wide and 30 metres in length.

The ship's crew lived on the upper decks. In total, 26 men are believed to have manned the Mayflower on its legendary journey. The master or commander was Christopher Jones; he occupied the quarters situated at the stern of the ship. The regular crew lived in a room called the forecastle, which was found in the bow. Accommodation was cramped, unhygienic and highly uncomfortable. It was constantly drenched by sea water, and the officers on board were fortunate in that they had their accommodation in the middle of the ship.

During the historic voyage, the Mayflower carried 102 men, women and children – these Pilgrims were boarded in the cargo area of the ship, which was deep below deck where the living conditions led to seasickness and disease. The Mayflower set sail from England in the July of 1620, but the ship was forced to turn back twice because a vessel that had accompanied it began to leak water. Many problems affected the Mayflower and its crew during the voyage. There were serious threats from pirates, but it was storm damage that was to prove problematic on this journey. In the middle part of the expedition, severe weather caused damage to the wooden beam that supported the ship's frame. Fortunately, however, it was repairable.

Several accidents also occurred, including the near drowning of John Howland, who was swept overboard but then rescued. Less fortunate was a crew member who died unexpectedly. Considered by all as 'mean spirited', his demise was viewed as a punishment from God. A child was also born during the voyage; Elizabeth Hopkins called her son Oceanus.

The ship reached Cape Cod safely on 11 November 1620. The religious community, who were hoping to start a spiritual life in the New World, thanked God for their survival a as they arrived in the New World.

> "The Mayflower set sail from England in 1620 but was forced to turn back twice"

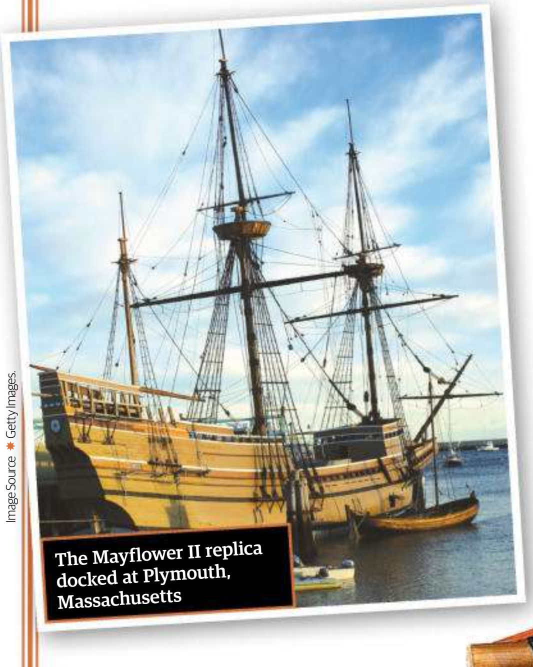
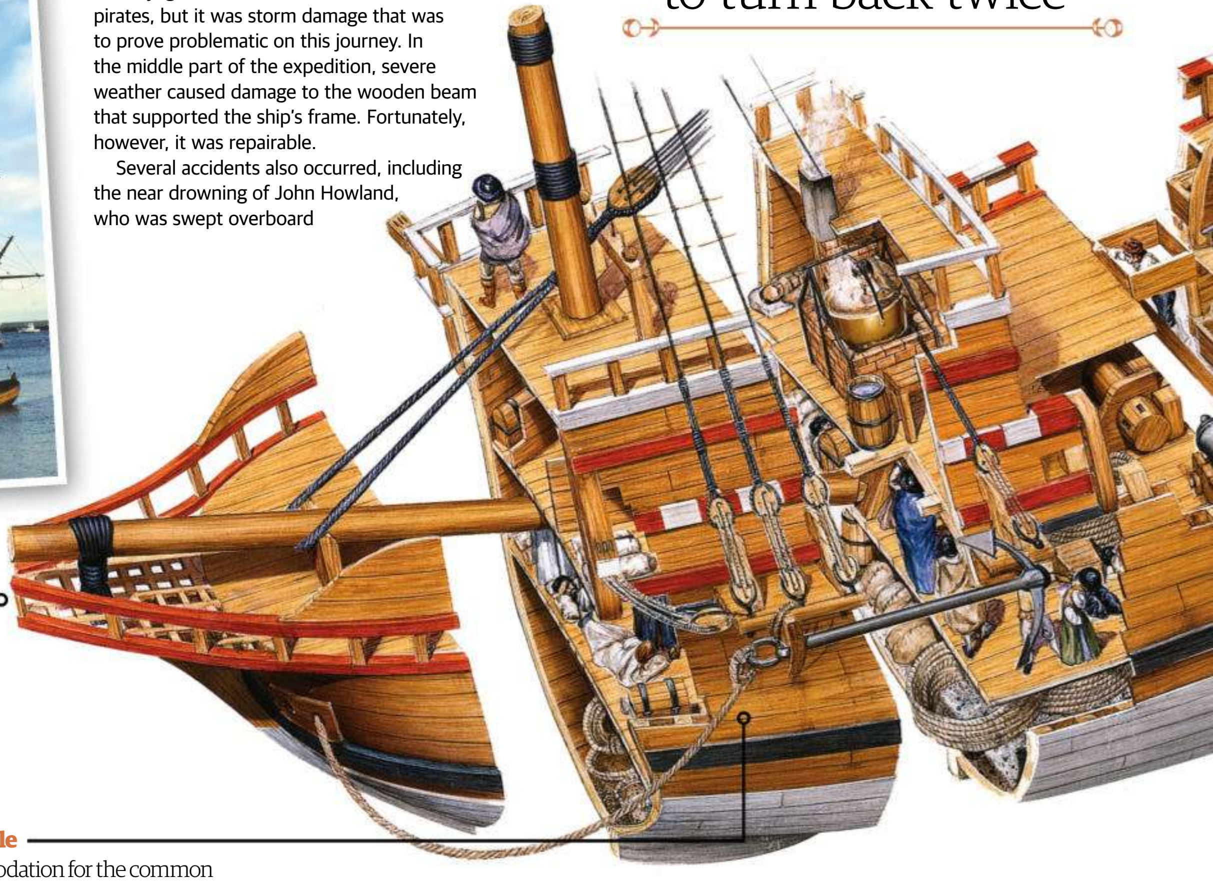

The Mayflower II replica docked at Plymouth, Massachusetts

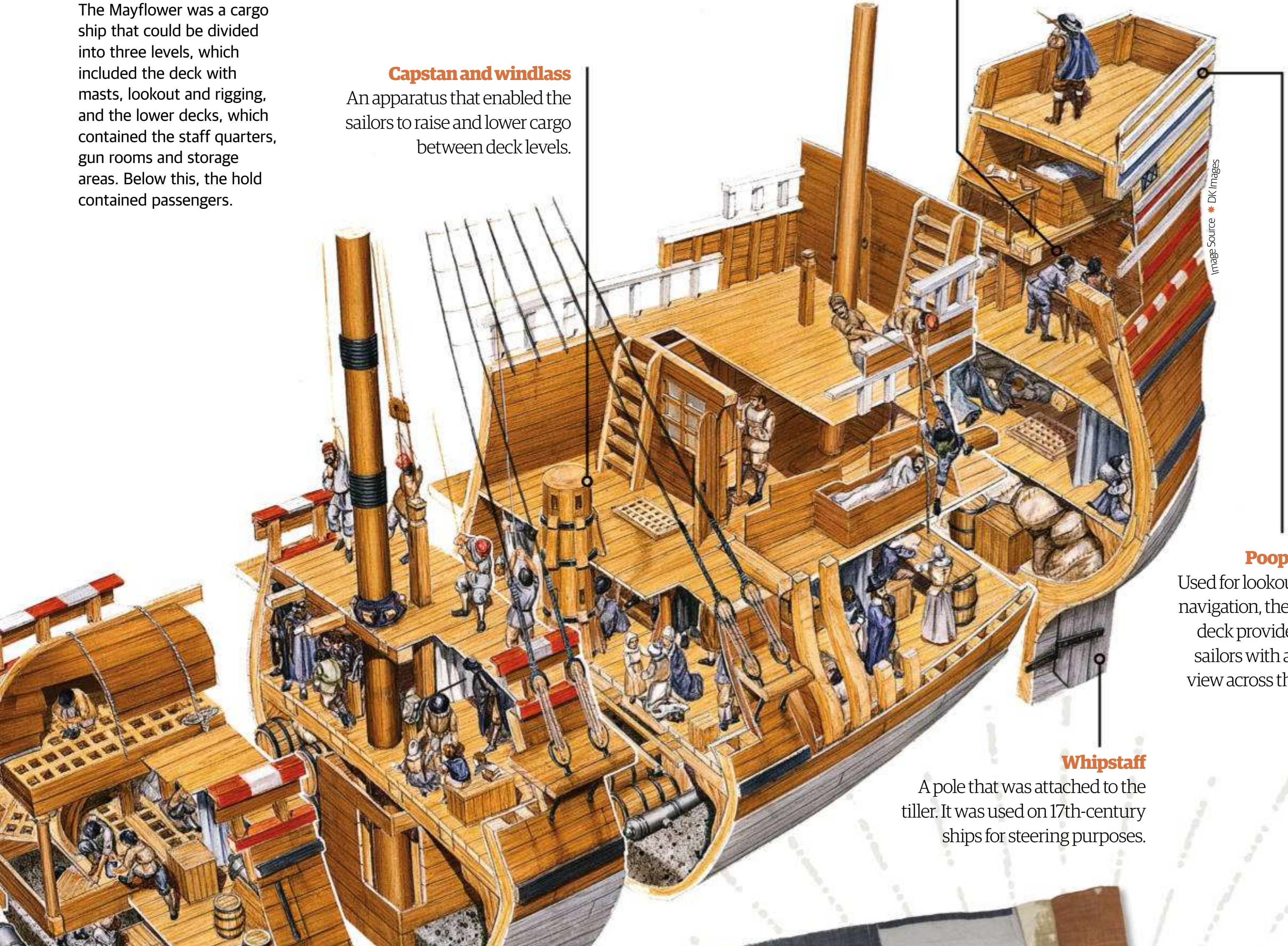
Image Source * Getty Images


Beakhead
The beakhead is the protruding part of the foremost section of the ship.

Forecastle
Accommodation for the common sailors, the men slept here when not working on deck.

INSIDE THE MAYFLOWER

The Mayflower was a cargo ship that could be divided into three levels, which included the deck with masts, lookout and rigging, and the lower decks, which contained the staff quarters, gun rooms and storage areas. Below this, the hold contained passengers.



Great cabin
The quarters assigned to the ship's master, which had a second bunk for a senior officer or guest.

Capstan and windlass
An apparatus that enabled the sailors to raise and lower cargo between deck levels.

Poop deck
Used for lookout and navigation, the poop deck provided the sailors with a wide view across the sea.

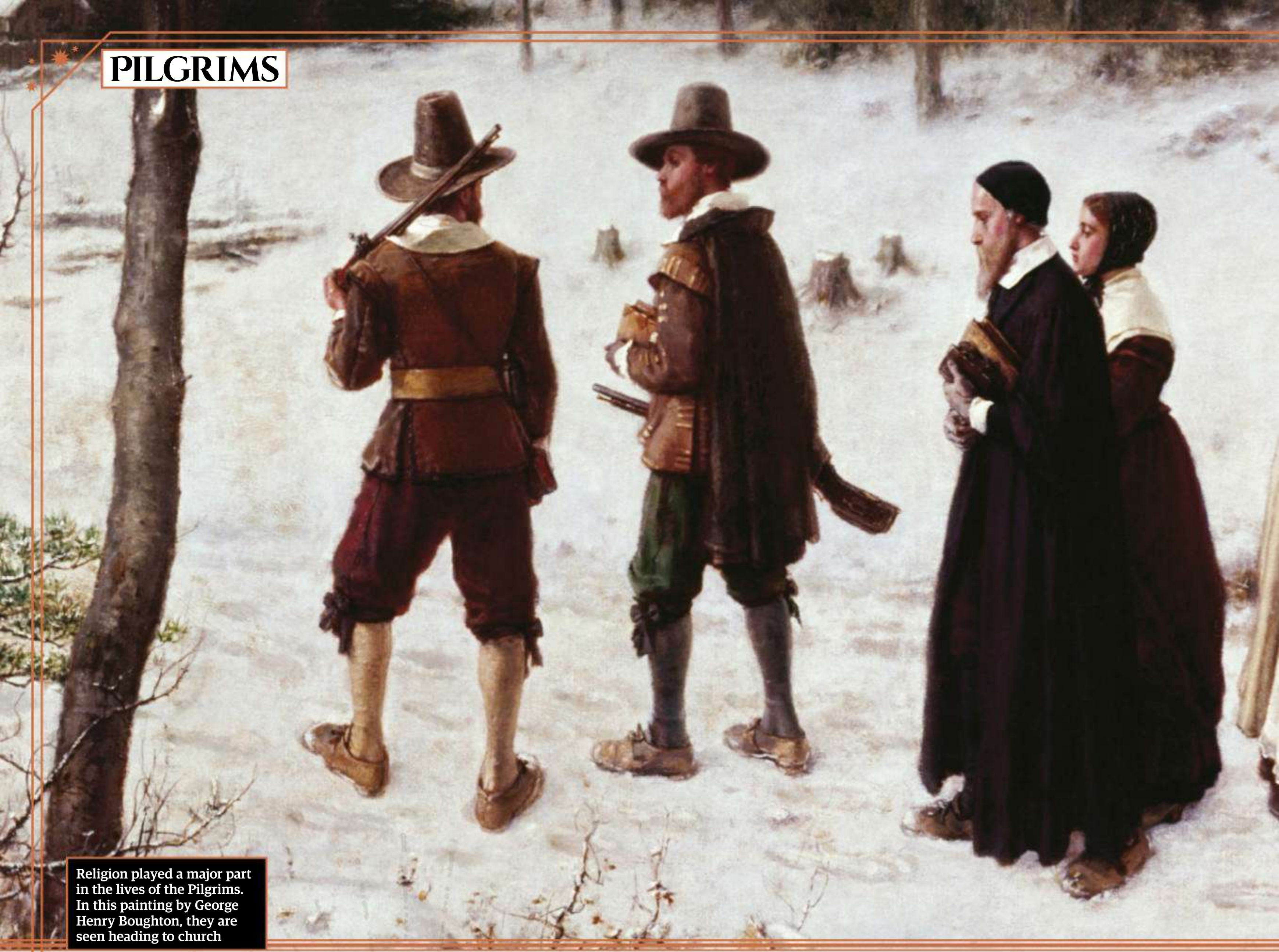
Whipstaff
A pole that was attached to the tiller. It was used on 17th-century ships for steering purposes.

Hold
The hold is the deepest section of the ship. It was used to store cargo and accommodate passengers.

Image Source ✱ DK Images

RIGHT: The Mayflower flew under the king's colours - the St George's cross of England and the St Andrew's cross of Scotland - which was a predecessor to the Union flag, like this 17th-century fragment

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Author Unknown.



Religion played a major part in the lives of the Pilgrims. In this painting by George Henry Boughton, they are seen heading to church

Winter of desperation

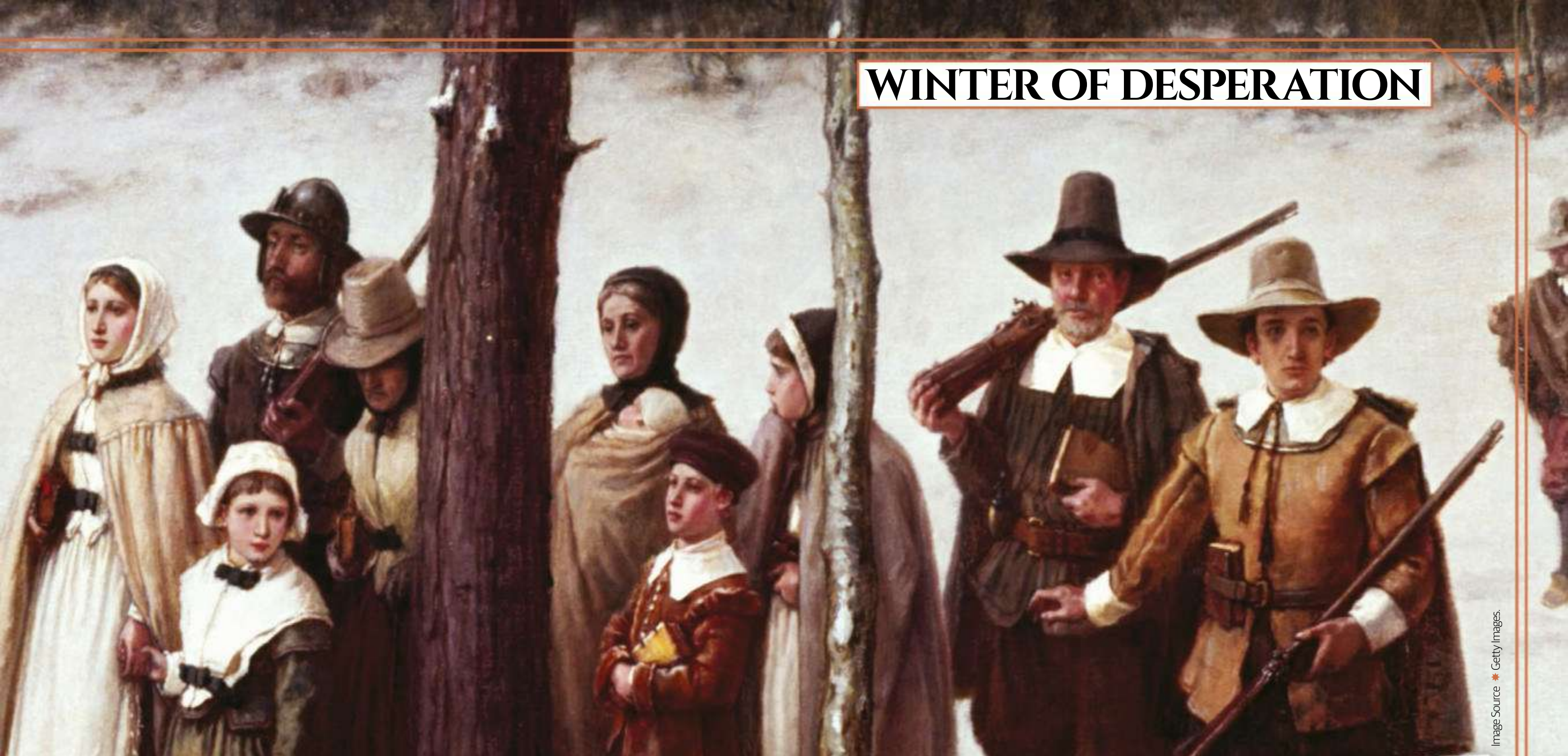
The winter of 1620-21 pushed the Pilgrims to breaking point amid starvation, disease and the uncertainty of the future

Written by Mike Haskew

They were Separatists – first in theology, and then in physical distance from their homeland. When the leaders of the radical Puritan splinter group that was originally known as the English Separatist Church concluded that their heritage and cultural integrity would survive only in the New World, they also understood that a passage across the Atlantic would be fraught with hardship.

Nevertheless, after a 66-day voyage of misery aboard the ship Mayflower, the Separatists – later called the Pilgrims by William Bradford, an early leader who left an enduring record of his people's experience titled *History of Plimouth Plantation, 1620-1647* – sighted land off the coast of Cape Cod on 11 November 1620. The Mayflower anchored in Provincetown harbour. Delays in their final departure from England had resulted in a voyage wracked by seasonal gales and had brought the Pilgrims to America on the cusp of winter – hardly an opportune time to establish a settlement.

Although the Virginia Company had originally been granted a patent for the founding of a colony at the mouth of the Hudson River – referred to as



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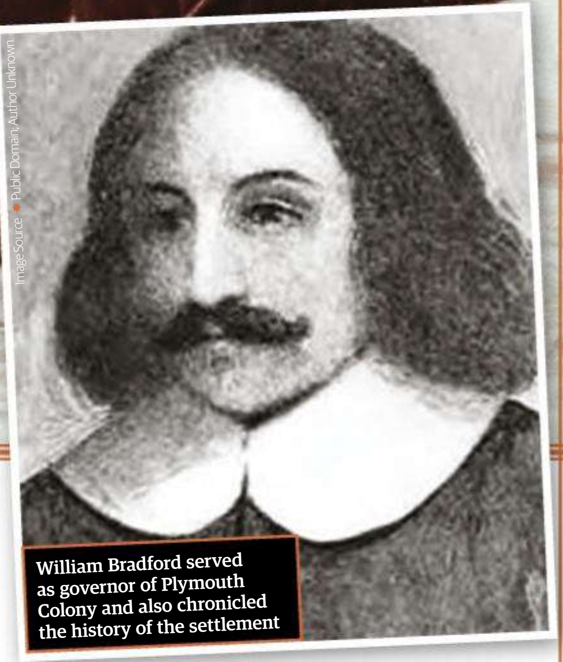


Image Source ✱ Public Domain, Author Unknown.

William Bradford served as governor of Plymouth Colony and also chronicled the history of the settlement

the "northern parts of Virginia" – the Pilgrims were actually far to the north. Unable to reach their original destination due to weather and shoals that impeded navigation, they determined to settle in Massachusetts. But before any of their company set foot on dry land, a political issue arose. Some believed that their location relieved them of any obligation to the Plymouth Council for New England, which had financed the enterprise and required them to work to pay off their debt. Others believed they were overstepping their bounds without a charter to settle in Massachusetts. One group even threatened to leave altogether and strike out on its own.

The immediate crisis was quieted with the ratification of the Mayflower Compact, an agreement signed by 41 male passengers that affirmed a "civil Body Politic" that would enact "just and equal laws" and required "due Submission and Obedience". The Compact, derived from the organisational structure of Congregational Church administration blended with elements of English common law, served as the basis for a regional government that lasted until 1691 when Plymouth became part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. John Carver is credited with the authorship of the document – he was its first signatory and was elected the first governor of what became Plymouth Colony.

While the Mayflower stood off Provincetown, the first Pilgrims went ashore in Massachusetts on 13 November and set about constructing a small boat called a shallop to ferry supplies. Captain Myles Standish, the military leader, and Christopher Jones, captain of the Mayflower, conducted three expeditions in the following weeks. They stumbled across the graves of Native Americans, appropriated stashes of corn that had been left as grave offerings for their own use, and engaged in a brief skirmish with the Native Americans in early December. Although there were no injuries on either side, this 'first encounter' with the Native Americans contributed to the Pilgrims' decision to look elsewhere for a suitable settlement location.

Sailing west, the Mayflower reached Plymouth harbour on 16 December and dropped anchor. The Pilgrims were not the first Europeans to arrive in the area. Captain John Smith, famed as the leader of the Jamestown expedition in Virginia, had named the region New Plymouth in 1614, and other European explorers had preceded him there. The Native American Wampanoag Nation had inhabited the area that came to be known as New England for 10,000 years before the first white men arrived, and when traders, fishermen and adventurers mingled with them they introduced European diseases. Apparently, around 1619 a terrible epidemic, probably smallpox, had decimated the local Native American population of the Patuxet tribe. Their once thriving settlement was now abandoned. However, the land was cleared, and that would facilitate the eventual planting of crops. Fresh water sources were also nearby.

On 21 December 1620, the first Pilgrims came ashore at Plymouth and chose this high ground, later named Cole's Hill, for their own settlement.

At Fort Hill, a short distance away, a cannon was positioned for defensive purposes. The only immediate provisions and shelter remained aboard the Mayflower, and most of the Pilgrims decided it was best to stay there during the early construction of dwellings and a storehouse on the land. Time was of the essence as the approaching winter promised to take its toll. Compounding the urgency was the simple fact that months aboard the vessel had left the voyagers weak and malnourished. Many of them suffered from scurvy.

Bad weather plagued the construction effort, but at least 20 men remained ashore each night to safeguard the work that had been completed. The structures were built of wattle and daub, a technique of woven wooden strips covered in a mixture of animal dung, mud, clay, sand and straw. The first structure completed was a common house, which required two weeks of arduous labour. Seven of the company had already died, including Bradford's wife, Dorothy, who fell overboard from the Mayflower and drowned. Eventually, two rows of houses were completed, and centuries later, the road between them was named Leyden Street in reference to the Pilgrims' time in the Netherlands. A governor's house and wooden stockade were erected later. At first, only a platform was built on Fort Hill to support a single cannon, but by the end of December five more heavy guns had been brought ashore and manhandled up the slope.

While the winter of 1620-21 was by no means the harshest experienced in New England, it was potent enough to claim numerous lives among the weakened Pilgrims, sailors and 'strangers' - labourers indentured to the Virginia Company (succeeded by a royal charter for the Plymouth Council for New England in November 1620) who were obliged to tolerate the Pilgrims' strict religious customs and leadership in exchange for eventual freedom in the New World.

During the first winter, 46 of the original 102 Pilgrims had succumbed to the ravages of the voyage, communicable disease or malnutrition. Of the 18 adult women among them, 13 perished during the first winter, and another died in the spring. A year after landing, only four adult women were left alive, and only 53 members of the entire company had survived to see the start of the new season. Many of the men whose construction skills had been counted on to build the dwellings and structures that would allow supplies to be offloaded from the Mayflower and the pitiful Pilgrims to leave the ship for good were so sick that they were unable to work. 19 buildings had been planned during the winter, but only seven homes and four storage houses were completed. The death toll would undoubtedly have been greater had Standish not plundered the Natives' corn stores, but this action would bring its own repercussions later on.

Bradford wrote of the woeful times and then related a startling event. On 16 March 1621 he wrote: "A certain Indian came boldly amongst them and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand, but marvelled at it." The Indian was Samoset, a prominent member of the Abenaki tribe, who had been acquainted with some of those early European traders and fishermen and had learned their language. He spoke to the Pilgrims of another Native American, Squanto, who was the sole survivor of the Patuxet epidemic, and arranged a meeting with Massasoit, chief of the Pokanoket tribe, and the Wampanoag Nation.

Six days later, Somoset returned with Massasoit and several other members of his tribe, along with Squanto. Although shortly after their arrival in Massachusetts, Standish and his men had fired on Native Americans, several of Massasoit's people had been killed by English sailors during an earlier

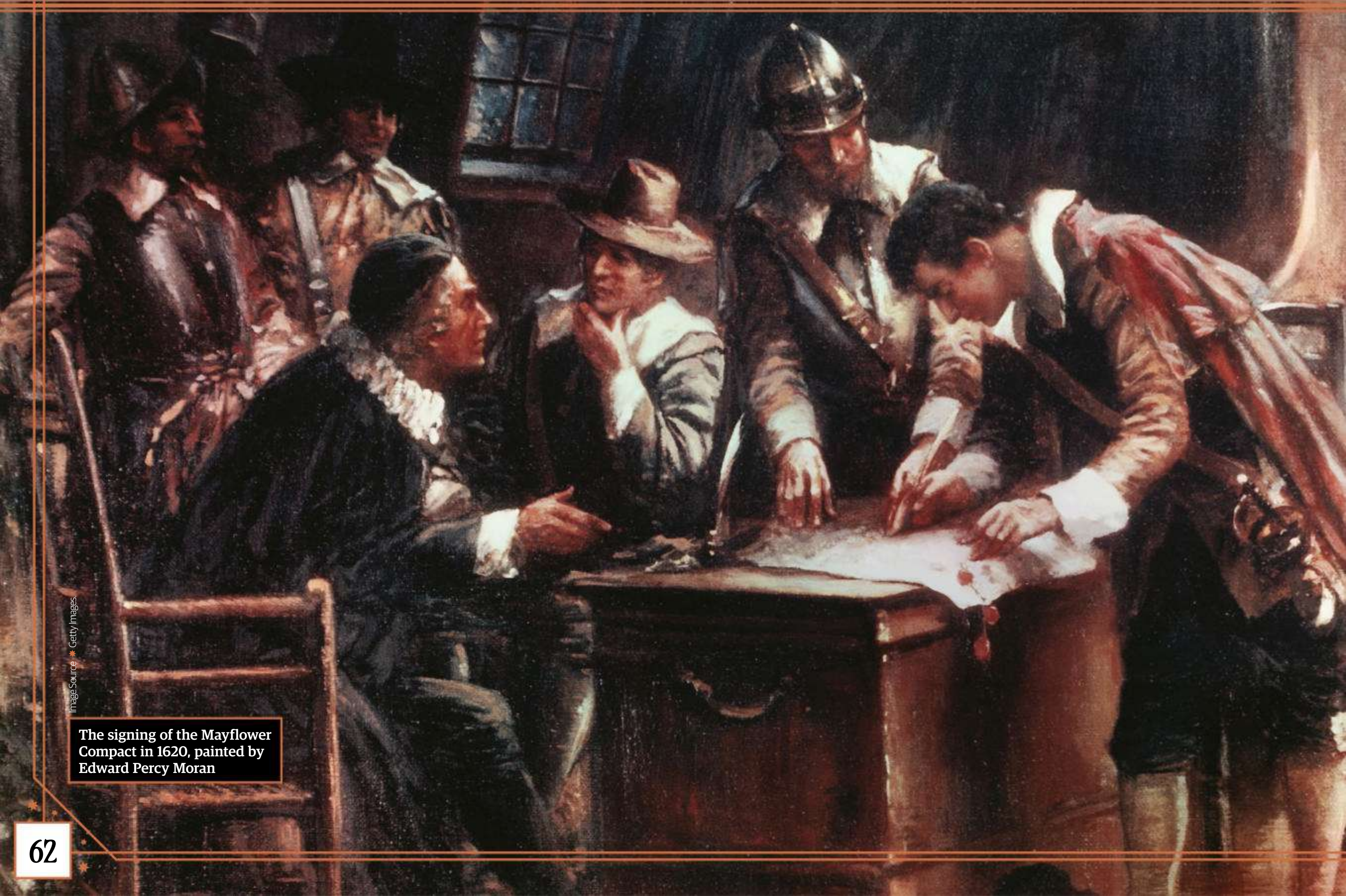


Image Source * Getty Images

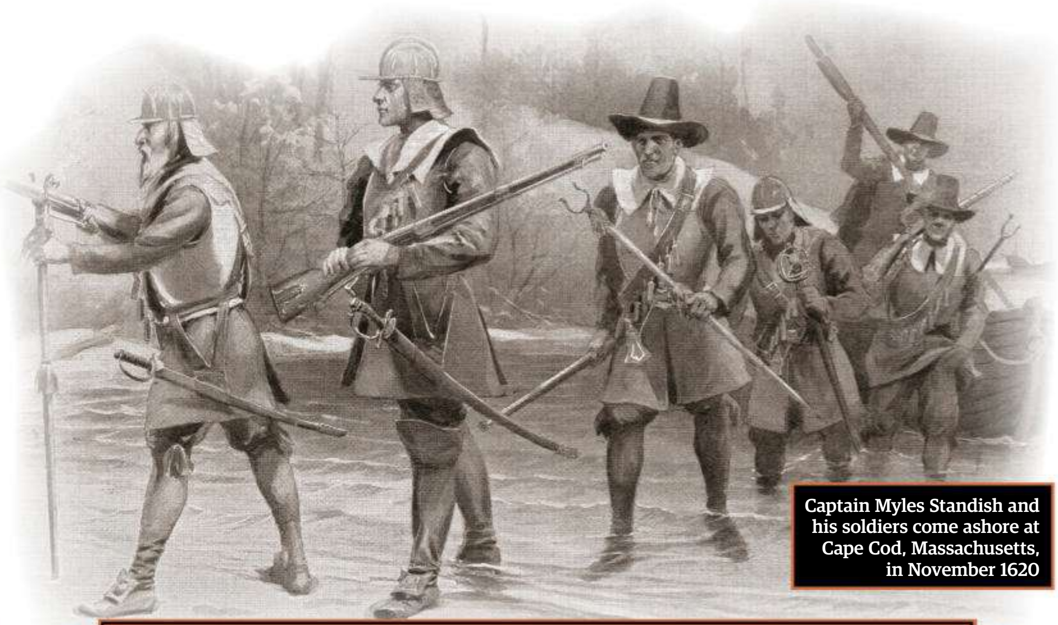
The signing of the Mayflower Compact in 1620, painted by Edward Percy Moran encounter, and Squanto had been kidnapped by Englishman Thomas Hunt and enslaved for a time in England before returning in 1619 with explorer Robert Gorges, the parties overcame their initial suspicions and distrust.

Governor Carver and Massasoit exchanged gifts and soon concluded a treaty that intended peace and mutual aid in the event that either people were attacked. The agreement, approved on 1 April 1621, even provided for the punishment of transgressors who might commit crimes against the others. Bradford noted that the treaty specified "that when their men [Massasoit's warriors] came to them [the Pilgrims], they should leave their bows and arrows behind them".

Squanto served as an interpreter between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans, and he helped to ensure the survival of the Europeans during their early months in America. He introduced them to agricultural methods such as planting corn with two small fish to serve as fertiliser. He told them of the best locations for fishing and where they were most likely to hunt successfully. After four months on station off the coast of Massachusetts, the Mayflower finally set sail for England, leaving the Pilgrims behind in their new home.

Native friendship fostered the stabilisation of the Plymouth Colony – had their initial encounter been hostile, it is unlikely the Pilgrims could have withstood an armed assault. Squanto further assisted in the establishment of the fur trade.

Within days of the Mayflower's departure, Governor Carver fell ill while working in his garden and died. Bradford was elected to succeed him, and by the autumn of 1621 the settlement was reaping its first harvest, overcoming cruel adversity and suffering to achieve its first measure of permanence. Although great challenges remained, the Pilgrims had established their foothold in the New World.



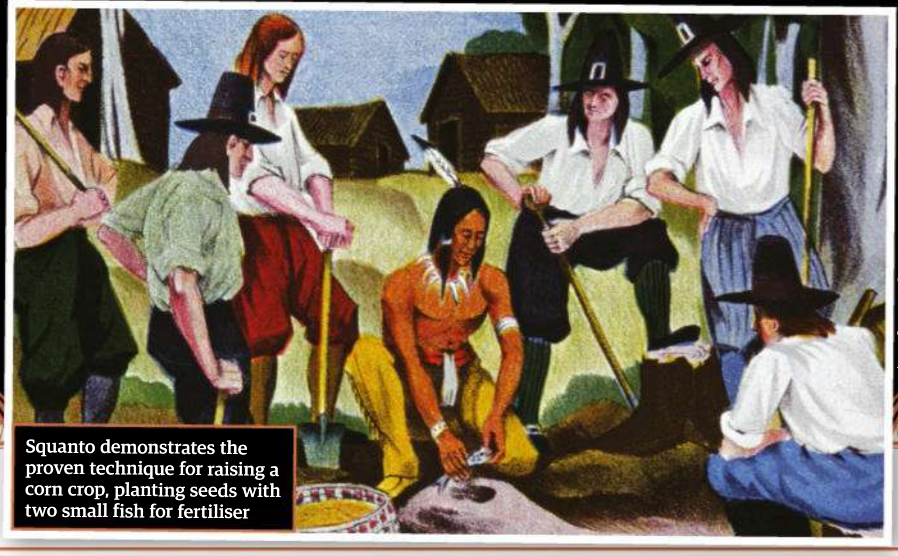
Captain Myles Standish and his soldiers come ashore at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in November 1620

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

THE JOURNEY OF SQUANTO

One of the earliest Native Americans to get to know Europe, Squanto found his way back to Massachusetts

Although some details of the life of Tisquantum, known popularly by the diminutive Squanto, are unknown, he is believed to have been born around 1580. A member of the Patuxet tribe, he was kidnapped around 1614 by English explorer Thomas Hunt and sold into slavery in Spain, for a time serving a group of Roman Catholic monks. He escaped to England and lived as a free man before returning to his home five years later as a guide for explorer Robert Gorges. When Squanto arrived at the site of the Patuxet settlement, he found devastation. All of the men, women, and children had died in a terrible epidemic of disease, and Squanto was the last of his people. Subsequently,Squanto lived among the Pilgrims for nearly two years and provided invaluable assistance as the colonists sought to survive the difficult winter of 1620-21. He was so esteemed that when word was received that he had been captured by a rival Indian tribe Captain Myles Standish organised an expedition to secure his freedom. Squanto died of "Indian fever" in 1622, aged about 40, while guiding a trading expedition to the Indian settlement of Monomoy. Pilgrim leader William Bradford lamented his death as a "great loss".



Squanto demonstrates the proven technique for raising a corn crop, planting seeds with two small fish for fertiliser

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Old Comers

The colony needed to grow, but the unexpected arrival of newcomers to Plymouth brought a storm of uncertainty, hardships and disorder

Written by Frances White

The first year of the Plymouth Colony had certainly not been an easy one. Those who had managed to survive had endured a difficult journey, a hellish winter, tense encounters with the locals and a severe lack of resources. They had managed to survive, but it had not been easy. With the second winter swiftly approaching and with heavy memories of the cost of the last one, the men and women of the colony were in desperate need of help and resources. However, what arrived on the shore in the November of 1621 was anything but expected.

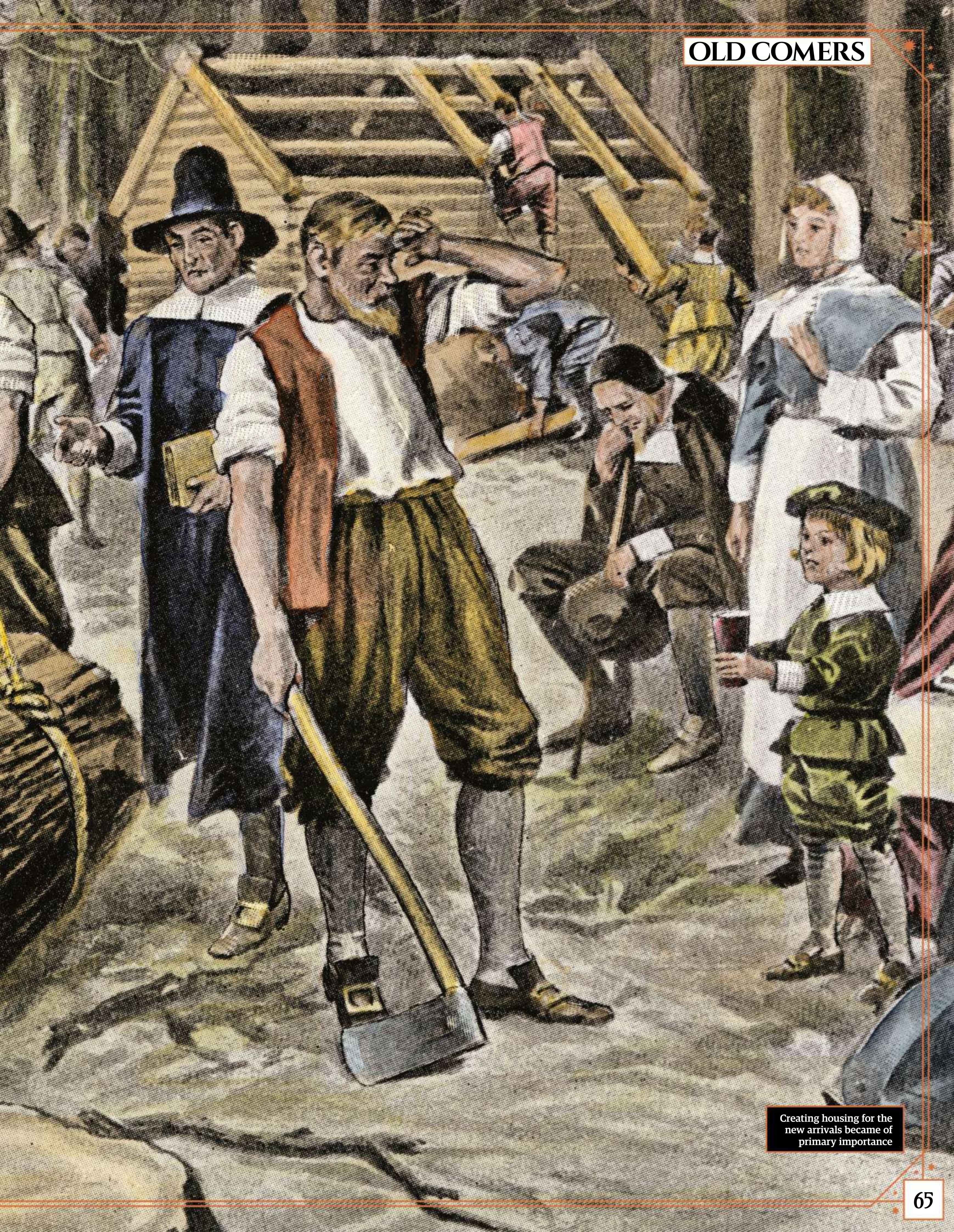
The colony was surprised and unprepared when the Fortune, a much smaller ship than the Mayflower, arrived on their shore. The Pilgrim Fathers had received no warning that another vessel was due to arrive so the appearance of the Fortune likely filled them with mild optimism and trepidation. They urgently needed resources, and more hands were always appreciated. However, to the colonists' disappointment the ship carried very few supplies. Instead they had many more mouths to feed and bodies to house in their already strained colony.

Community tensions in New England started as early as the arrival of the second wave of colonists aboard the Fortune in 1621

35 new settlers arrived on the Fortune. Luckily, most of them were young men who could quickly be put to work. Many of them were known to the colonists, which likely helped from keeping the welcome too hostile, but the situation was anything but ideal. Led by Robert Cushman, the Leiden agent in London for the Mayflower, most of the passengers were from London but three were from Holland. As far as historical records can tell us, only one of the passengers was a woman – Mrs Martha Ford, who gave birth to a son soon after her arrival. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, many of the passengers were not seeking freedom from religious persecution, and were actually not religious at all. With the arrival of the Fortune, single men now greatly outnumbered the eligible females of the colony – Plymouth now had 66 eligible men and only 16 women. However, many of these new settlers went on to become notable figures for the colony and American history, including Philip Delano, one of whose descendants was no other than later US President Franklin D Roosevelt.

The arrival of the Fortune could have actually gone much worse. Initially the vessel lingered on the tip of Cape Cod, causing great alarm to the Native Americans who believed it could be a hostile French ship. The colony in turn were so worried about the chance of attack that they loaded the

Image Source ✱ Alamy.



Creating housing for the new arrivals became of primary importance cannon on Burial Hill. The revelation that it was a friendly English boat instead caused much relief – likely enough to mask the disappointment it was not laden down with much needed supplies.

For the passengers on board, however, the disappointment and worry only increased. Few were prepared for the bleak and barren shoreline they observed from the deck as they travelled from Cape Cod to Plymouth. Rather than a land of opportunity and a chance of a new life, they saw a foreboding and desolate landscape.

It was no better when they set foot onshore. Upon seeing the dilapidated and stark conditions the new colonists began to panic. Their worries were so great they actually told the ship's master that they wanted to re-embark and leave. The crew managed to talk them out of such a dramatic action, but it is easy to understand just how panicked the travellers were. William Bradford, the colony governor, recorded the depressing conditions observed by the newcomers: "So they were landed; but there was not as much as biscuit-cake or any other victialls for them neither had they any beding, but some sorry things they had in their cabins, nor pot, nor pan, to dress meate in; nor over many cloathes..." Suffice it to say, neither the colony nor the settlers themselves were pleased with the developments. The Plymouth Colony especially weren't happy that Thomas Weston, who initially financed their endeavour, had sent new settlers without any provisions or goods.

It is unlikely, however, that Weston had the wellbeing of the colonists at the forefront of his mind for the Fortune carried an additional piece of cargo: a letter from the Merchant Adventurers. The organisation was furious that the colony had not sent goods back with the Mayflower – goods that had been promised after the Merchant Adventurers financially supported their venture. To keep the organisation on side, the Fortune was laden with £500 worth of goods when it was sent back to England, which was enough to keep the colonists on track with their repayment of the debt they owed. However, like almost everything for the Plymouth Colony, this was ill-fated. The Fortune was captured on its return journey by the French. When the ship finally made it back to England it carried none of its cargo and the colony's debt grew.

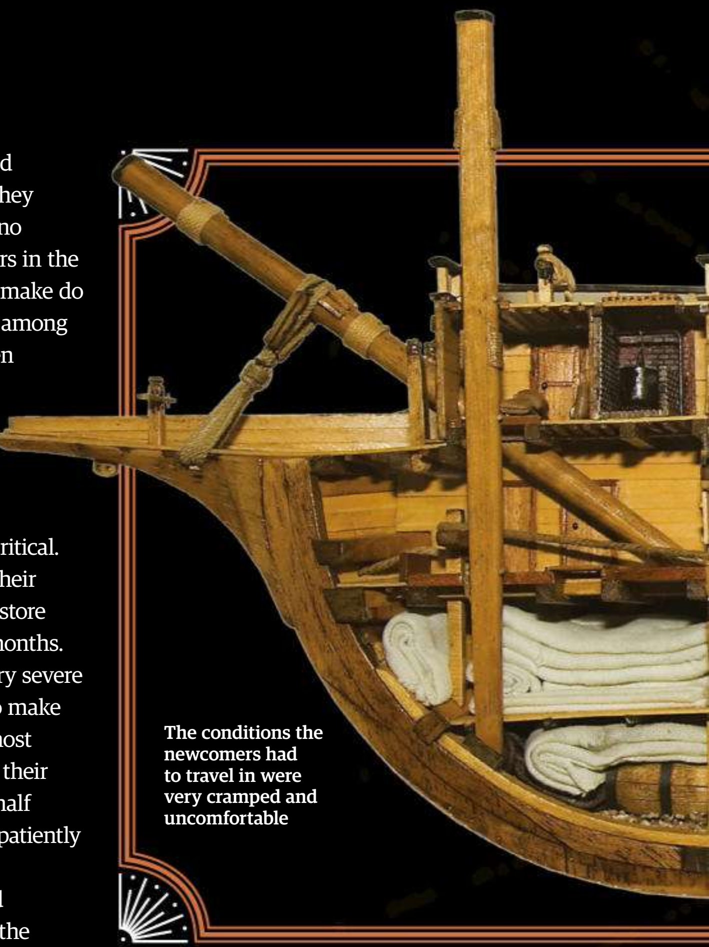
However, the colonists had more pressing concerns than the repayment of their debt. The second winter was coming and they needed to deal with this influx of new people. As they were unprepared for the arrival, there was no accommodation available for the newcomers in the little colony. Bradford had no choice but to make do with what he had, dividing the passengers among the seven houses they already had and even putting some of them into the public buildings, many of which became dormitories for the young men.

The temporary living conditions were nothing short of uncomfortable, but it was the shortage of food that was most critical. Bradford worked out that even by cutting their already strained daily rations by half, their store of corn would only keep them fed for six months. The Pilgrims had already experienced a very severe winter and had worked tirelessly all year to make the next one easier, but now they were almost back to square one. The newcomers, for all their unfortunate timing, quickly agreed to the half allowance of rations, and everyone waited patiently in hope of the arrival of future supplies.

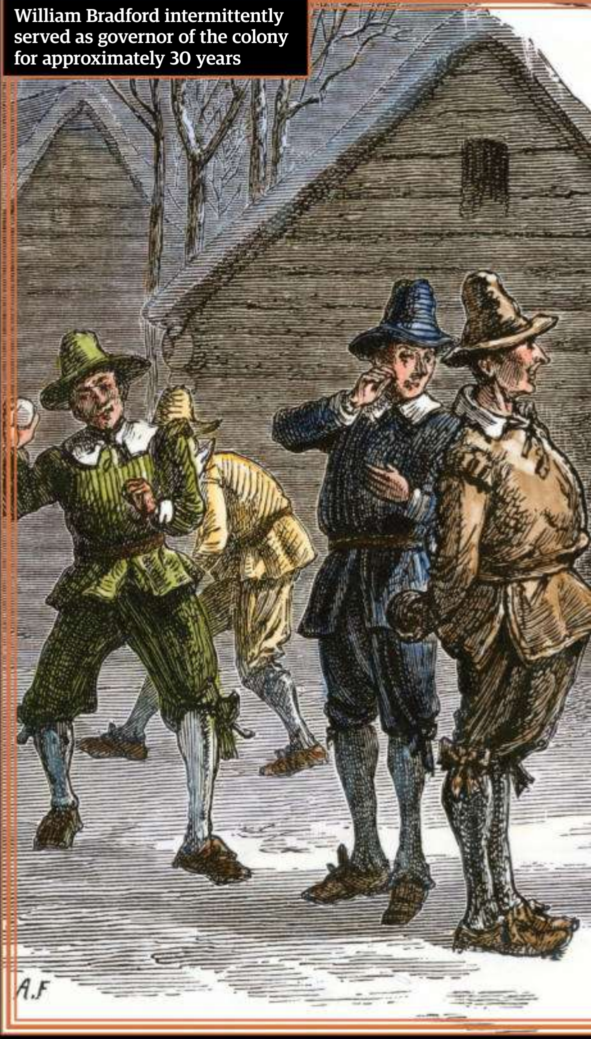
Weston, despite the disappointment, had not given up entirely on his investment in the Plymouth Colony. So in the summer of 1623, two more ships began the arduous three-month journey from London to Plymouth. 140-ton supply ship the Anne arrived first, carrying mostly passengers on 10 July 1623. Smaller 44-ton pinnace the Little James arrived a week or so later, carrying much-needed cargo. Between them, the two ships carried 96 new settlers – a significant number for the Plymouth Colony. Some of these passengers were from Leiden in Holland, including William Bradford's future wife Alice, as well as Patience and Fear, William and Mary Brewster's daughters.

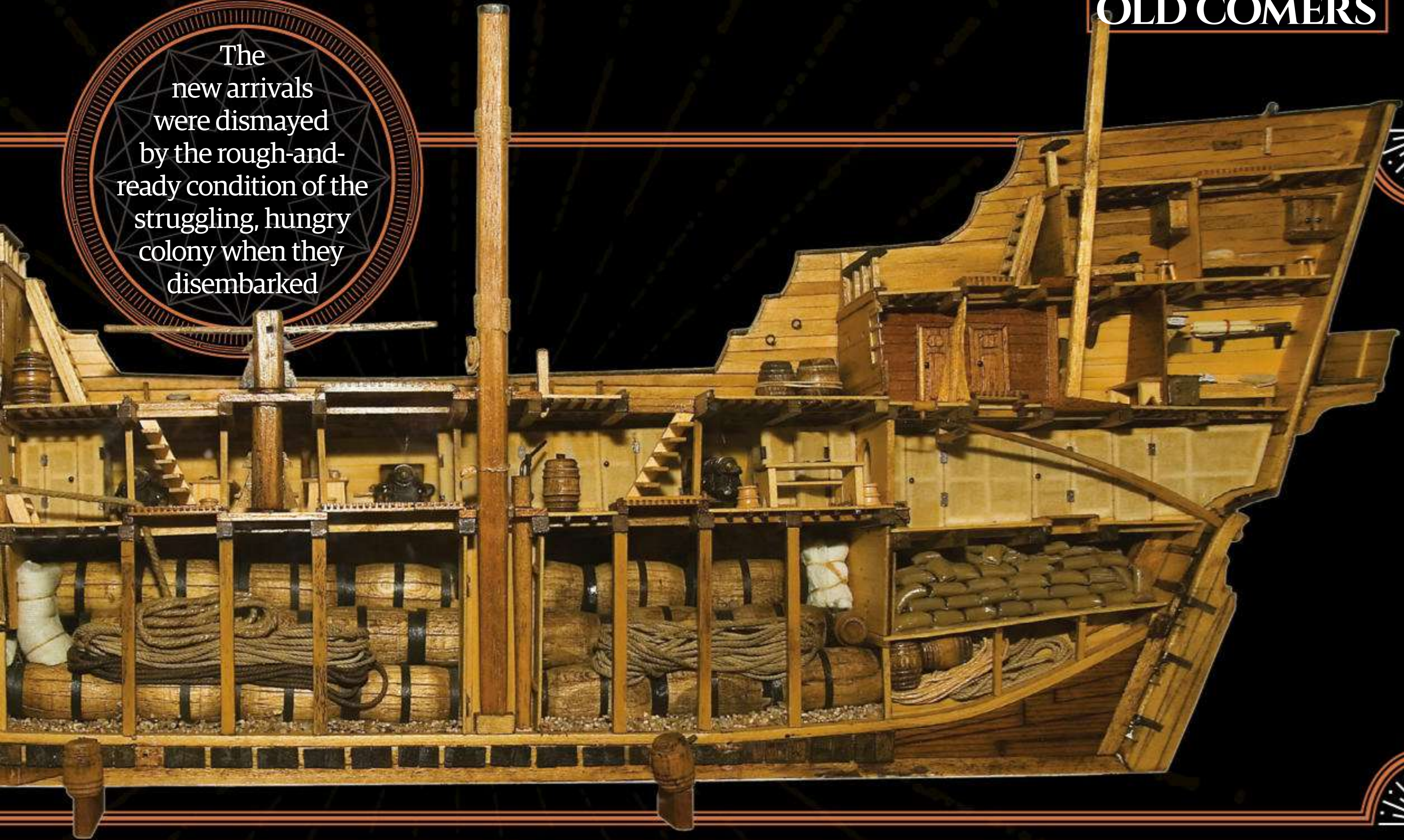
Although it did carry a large number of passengers, the Anne and its crew did not intend to stay for long. The ship planned to return to cargo shipping, and almost immediately the crew began to load it full of timber, beaver skins and whatever else they could find. In a matter of days it was sailing back across the Atlantic to England. The Little James, however, would remain in the colony to be used for fishing, cargo and military service under the command of its novice captain Emmanuel Altham and Master John Bridges. Brand new from the builder's yard, the vessel was envisioned to be hugely beneficial to the colony,

> "Upon observing the shabby state of the colony, the crew of the Little James feared they had been fooled"


The conditions the newcomers had to travel in were very cramped and uncomfortable

William Bradford intermittently served as governor of the colony for approximately 30 years





The new arrivals were dismayed by the rough-and-ready condition of the struggling, hungry colony when they disembarked

Image Source ✱ Musphot.

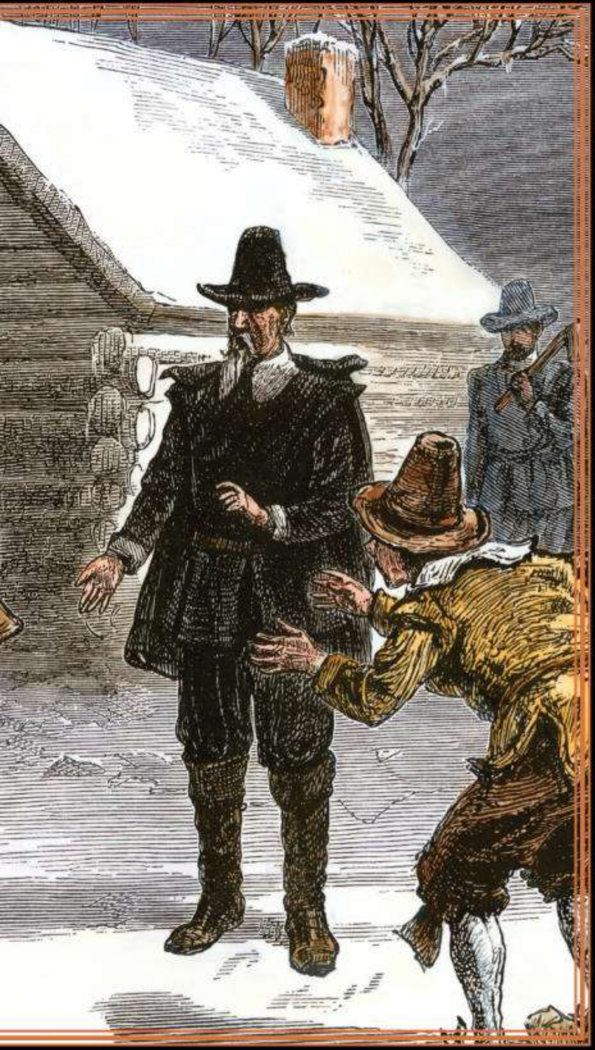


Image Source ✱ Alamy.

THE FIRST TRADING POST

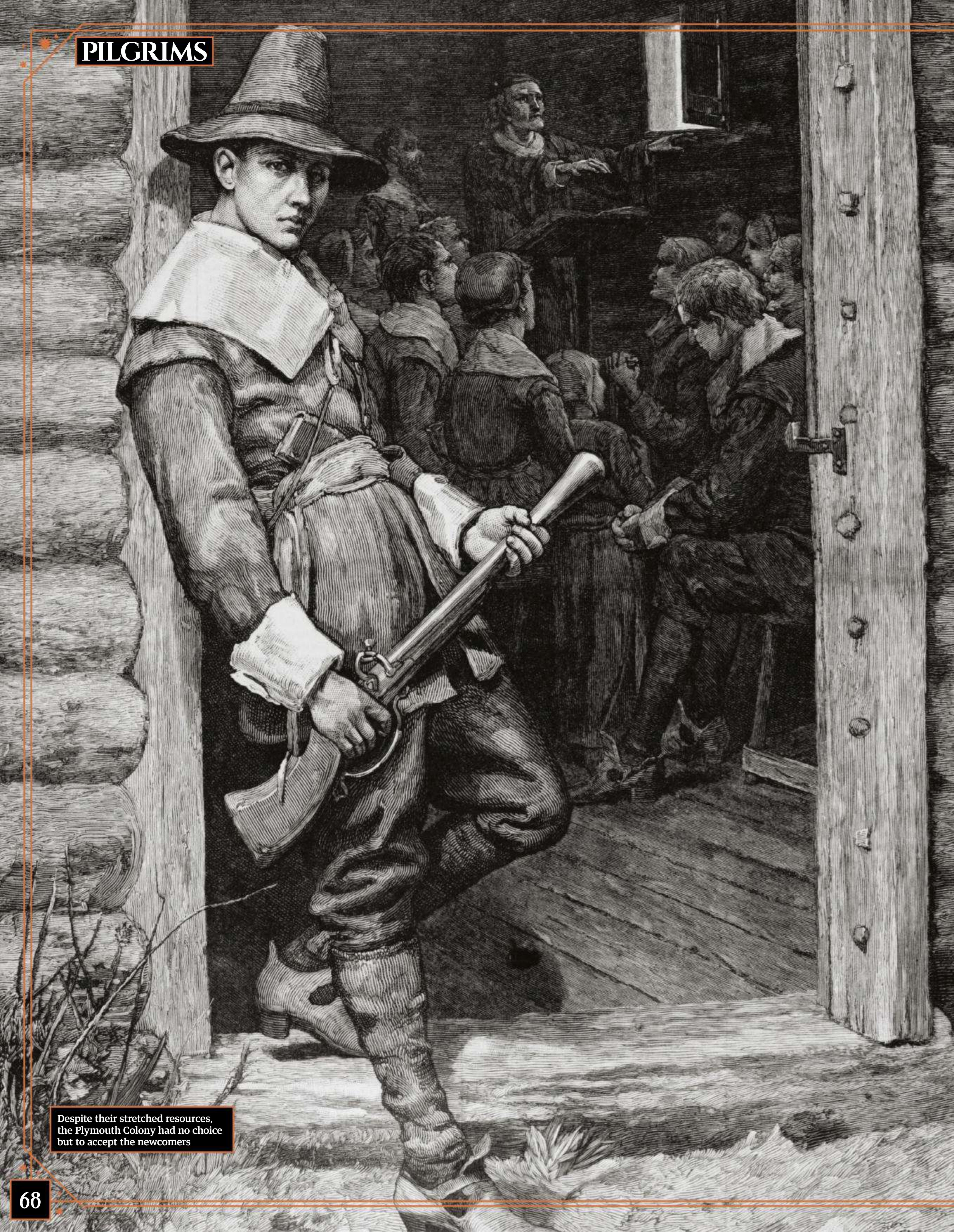
Finding resources in the New World

The Plymouth Colony knew the importance of trade and that the lack of it was slowing down their development. However, in 1627, seven years after the colony was first established, the Aptucxet trading post was built. Approximately 20 miles south of Plymouth, the post was based on the Manamet River on upper Cape Cod.

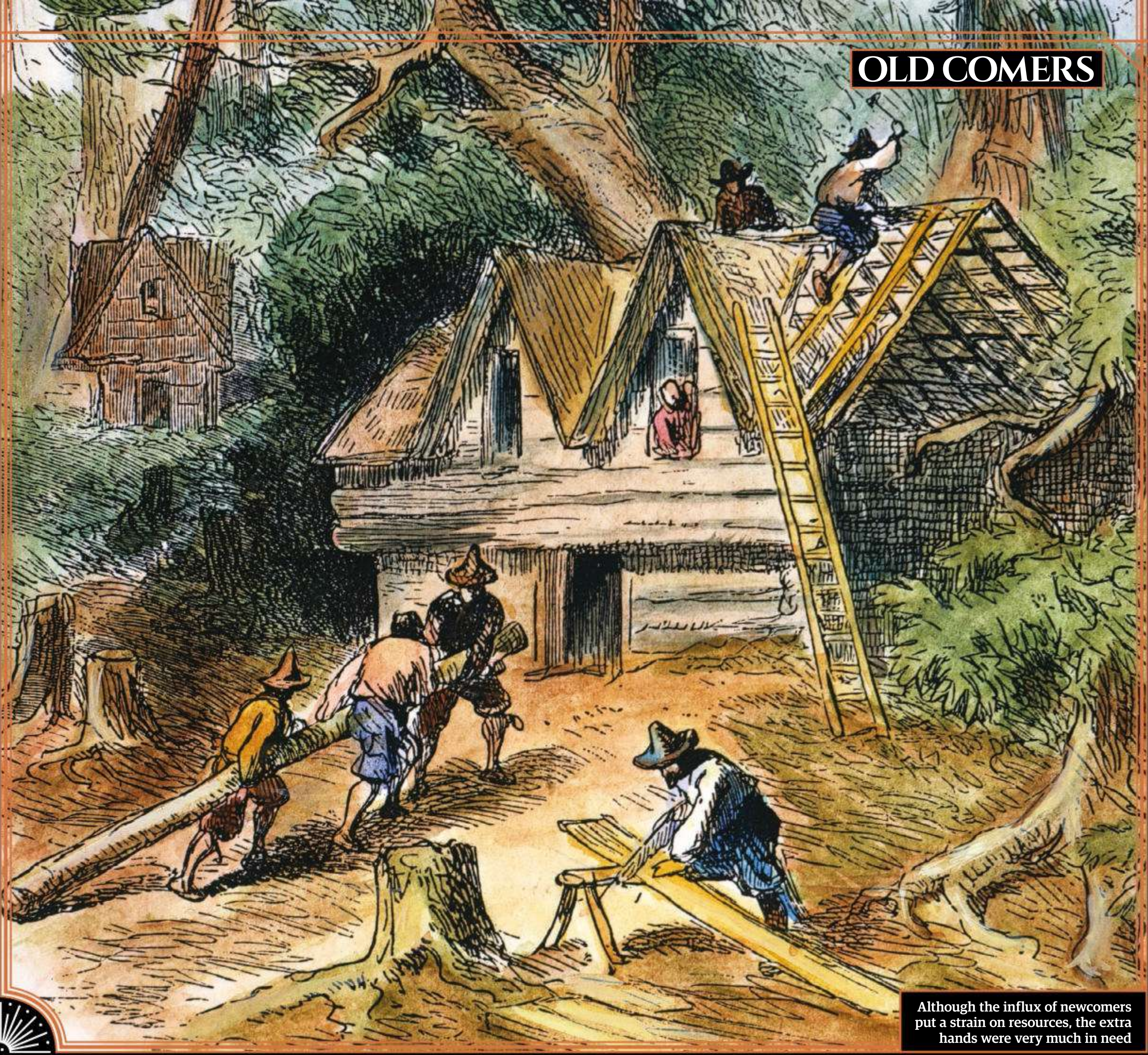
This time, they wanted to establish something more permanent to encourage frequent trade with the Wampanoag Native Americans – a fur trade to repay the debts they owed the Adventurers. The beans and corn supplied by the Natives were also important resources for the colonists. The trading post was so vital that it was staffed and maintained all year round by colonists. The success of the trading post encouraged the Dutch colonists based in New Amsterdam (modern-day New York) to also trade with the Pilgrims. As the colony grew, so did their trading aspirations, and the Aptucxet trading post was followed in 1633 by the Mettenque trading post, based in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, and also the Cushnoc Trading Post in Maine.

This replica of the trading post can be viewed today at the Aptucxet Trading Post Museum

Image Source ✱ Vejlenser.



Despite their stretched resources, the Plymouth Colony had no choice but to accept the newcomers



Although the influx of newcomers put a strain on resources, the extra hands were very much in need

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

“Little James sat in Plymouth harbour for the winter of 1623 in near freezing conditions, with the crew barely able to survive on small rations and no alcohol”

but, as usual, things didn't go exactly as planned. Years later Bradford would comment: “I fear the adventurers did over-pride themselves in her... for she had ill success.” Ill success was a very mild way of putting it.

The biggest problem with the Little James was that the ship's crew had agreed to spend six years in the colony, but as a form of shareholder instead of wage earners, so they would earn money from sharing the ship's profits from fishing and trading. The investors (the Merchant Adventurers) would pay for all their food, clothing and so forth. However, like many who ventured to this new ‘promised land’, what they found there was not what they had been sold. Upon observing the shabby state of the colony and the meagre conditions the colonists lived in, the crew feared they had been fooled and that there was little money to be made here. The uproar was so great that William Stephens, a gunner, and Thomas Fell, a carpenter of the ship, encouraged the crew to go on strike, demanding they were paid in the meantime between trades.

Bradford worked tirelessly to calm them down for the good of the colony, which he did manage, but it came at great personal financial cost, with the leader offering to pay them himself rather than awaiting any payment from the Merchant Adventurers.

It was a tense situation. The crew of the Little James believed they had been duped and saw the situation as hopeless, while Bradford and the colony were in desperate need of any help they could get. The Merchant Adventurers believed they could see a return on their investment from the ship trading in furs, but in reality the search for furs turned up almost nothing. The ship didn't have the quality trade goods that the Natives desired in exchange for furs, and the market was dominated by prosperous Dutch traders who could offer a much better price for the Natives. To add to the problems, the ship also got caught in a gale and lost the grip of its anchors. The company had to refit the vessel

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

a new mast, anchors and rigging. Little James sat in Plymouth harbour for the winter of 1623 in near freezing conditions, with the crew barely able to survive on small rations and no alcohol – the primary drink at the time (water was often unsafe). The crew quickly grew more mutinous as their hunger and contempt for the entire journey festered through the cold, dark winter.

By the spring of 1624, while anchored at Pemaquid during a fishing expedition, these tensions finally reached a climax and the entire crew mutinied, threatening to destroy the ship. It was such a severe situation that Captain Altham had to journey back to New Plymouth in a small boat in an effort to find food for his furious crew. Working with the Pilgrim Edward Winslow, they managed to pull together some bread and peas but when they returned they discovered that the boat had been wrecked by a storm, drowning the master and two crewmen.

With their own hatred for the entire journey fresh, the crew, led by Fell and Stephens refused to save the ship. However the masters of other vessels in the port offered to help if Bradford paid them in beaver skins. Bradford agreed and they managed to haul the ship to safety. The repairs to the Little James came at great expense to the company and by the time it was seaworthy again, the investors and Bradford himself had all become very frustrated with the entire situation. The ship that had been intended to be a great boon to their colony had instead been a costly curse. Eager to be rid of it once and for all, Bradford sent the Little James and its mutinous crew back across the ocean to England.

But the Little James' bad luck continued – Fell and Stephens abandoned it in the River Thames and sued the Adventurers and the colony for lack of wages, conveniently ignoring the fact that they themselves had mutinied and refused to save the ship. It was eventually seized by the Admiralty Court and by the trading season of 1625 it was seaworthy again. Likely much to Bradford's chagrin, the Little James returned to the Plymouth Colony to carry furs back to England to settle the colony's growing debt of £1,300. The cargo was loaded and sent on its way, but Bradford probably should have taken the cursed ship as an ill-omen – while sailing through the English Channel, the Little James was seized by pirates and all of its precious cargo was taken.

The whole experience with the Little James had been an unmitigated disaster. The problem was that the Pilgrims' harvest was actually better than ever, and for once they were experiencing a little prosperity. However, their trade was struggling because of their lack of transport to take goods to England. The chance the Little James offered was great, and the disasters that surrounded it hurt the Pilgrims greatly, setting them back years in their development of the colony, especially in regards to trade. The Pilgrims had no choice but to send furs to England in very small quantities, and their much-needed growth in trade was slow.

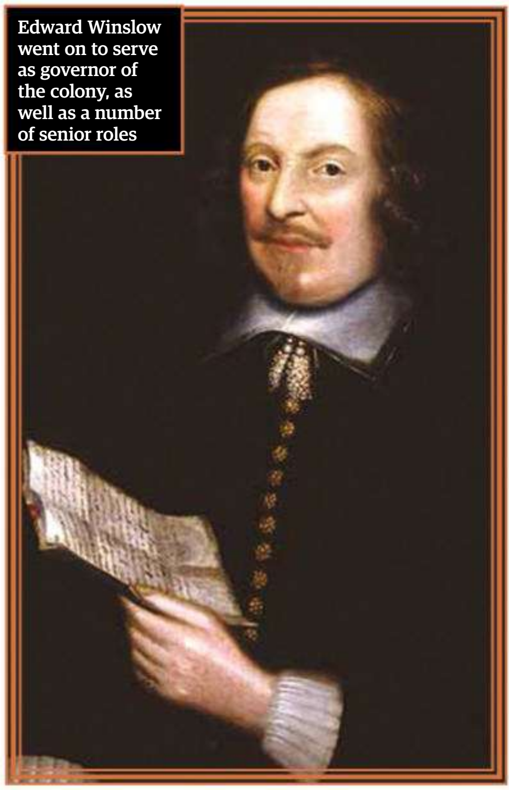
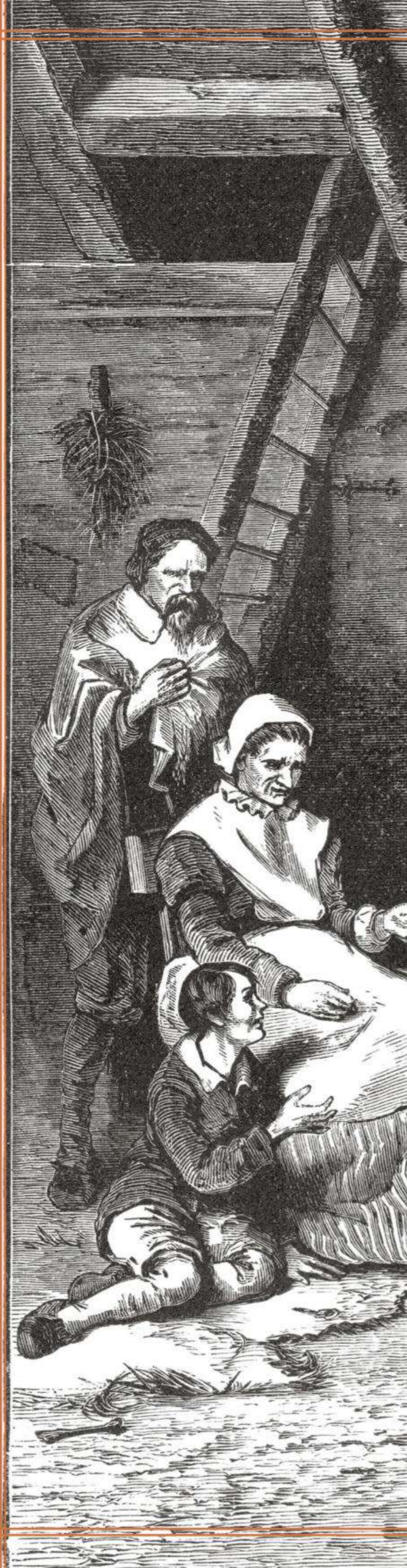

Edward Winslow went on to serve as governor of the colony, as well as a number of senior roles

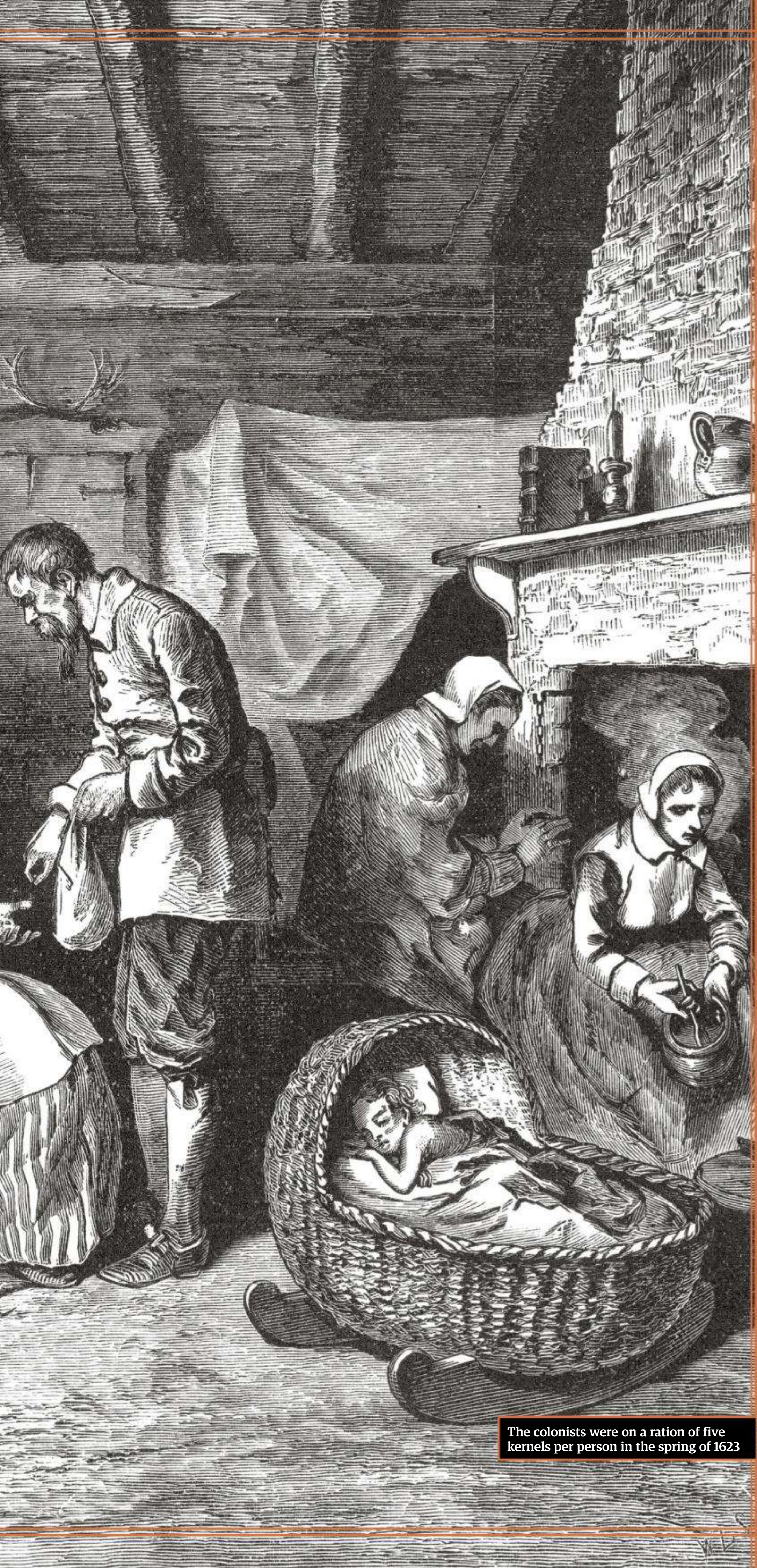
Image Source ✱ Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, MA.

Their early treatment by their sponsors is likely to have led to the colonists' distrust and hatred of English oversight

The results from the Anne were also not entirely positive. Lots of the passengers on board the ship were unprepared for the harsh reality of life on the frontier and many of them returned to England within the year. Most of the passengers who remained were unwilling to integrate into the colony – they insisted that the Adventurers' had promised them they would either settle in a new community or "be free from the bonds by which the Plymouth colonists were enslaved". That basically meant they wouldn't be burdened by the heavy debt the colony owed the company. In order to keep the colonists happy, they were given land near Eel River that was known as Hobs Hole. It became Wellingsley, about a mile away from Plymouth Rock.

The usefulness of the new colonists was mixed. Bradford stated that some of them were beneficial





The colonists were on a ration of five kernels per person in the spring of 1623

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

people who went on to serve the colony well – including the wives and children of men already there. However, the leader also grew increasingly frustrated by the number of newcomers who were completely unprepared and unfit for the hardship that came with living in a new settlement.

It's clear to see that Bradford wasn't being dramatic as Robert Cushman, a Leiden agent based in London, wrote a letter of apology to Bradford saying, "It greeveth me to see so weake a company sent you, and yet had I not been here they had been weaker." It is clear to see now why so many of the early arrivals to the colony seemed to disappear – they simply couldn't handle the hardship and were sent back to England.

Gaining a new life in America was anything but easy. But through the tribulations, the bad luck, and even through the deaths, the colony was slowly but surely growing. What would ultimately become the United States would be built on the sheer will and determination of their key resource – people.

GROWTH OF A NATION

Finding resources in the New World

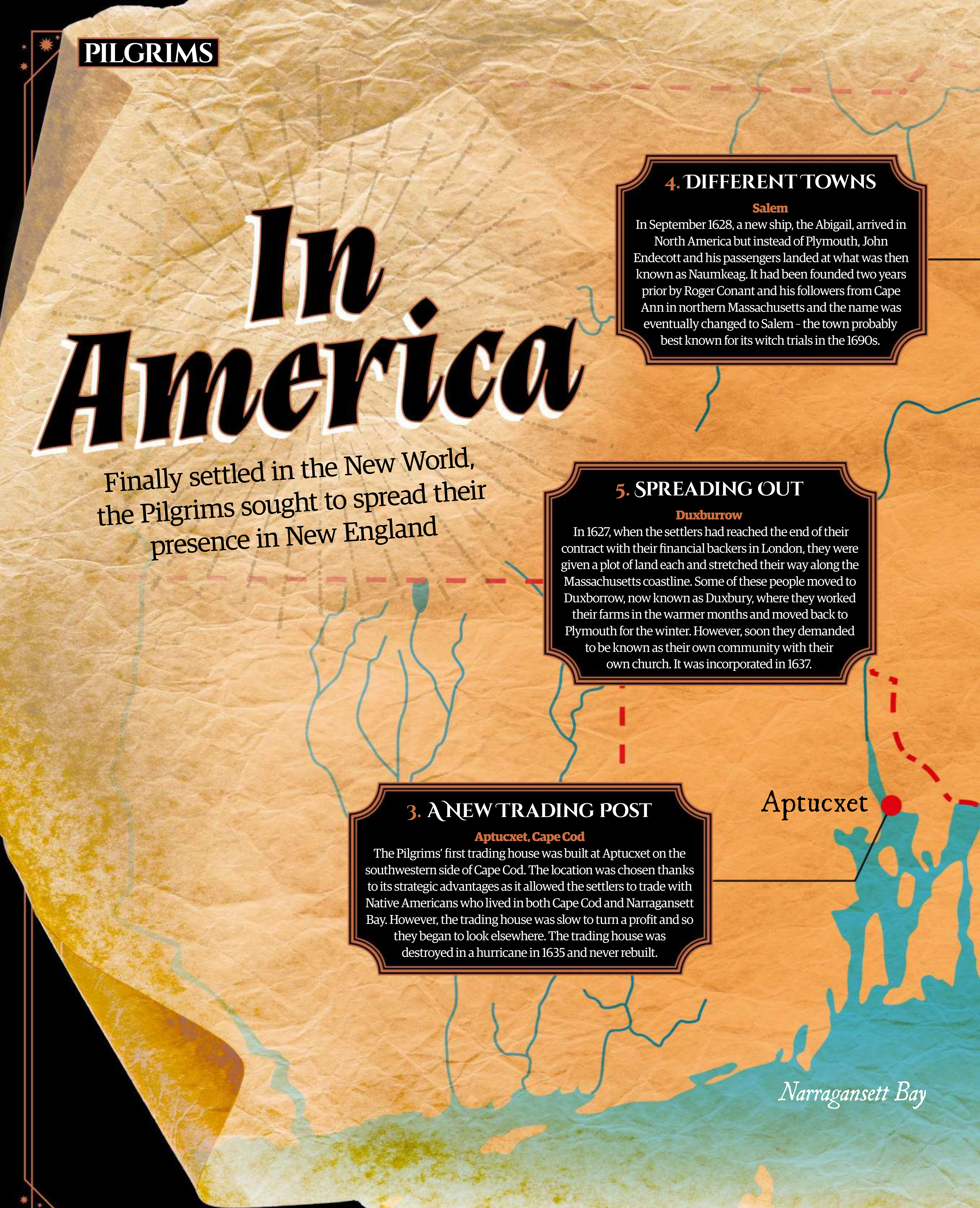
Although trade was important for growth, a steady stream of new settlers was vital for the colony's survival and expansion. As well as the colonists who travelled on Fortune, Little James and Anne, another ship arrived in Plymouth in September 1623 carrying people who wanted to settle in the colony at Weymouth, which had previously been a failure. In March 1624, another boat landed at Plymouth carrying not only settlers, but the colony's first cattle. While the colony did have chickens, pigs and goats before, the three heifers and bull would be vital to its development. In August 1629, another vessel arrived, also named the Mayflower, carrying 35 new settlers. From 1629 to 1630, the prospect of moving to the New World must have been less daunting as ships frequently arrived to drop off new settlers. Though it's difficult to ascertain exact figures, the estimated number of colonists by 1630 was 300. This meant that in ten years, the population had almost tripled. From then on it would continue to grow faster and faster as the years passed, with approximately 2,000 by 1643 and a massive 7,000 by 1691.

Although Plymouth was the first colony, others such as the Massachusetts Bay Colony grew far larger

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

In America

Finally settled in the New World, the Pilgrims sought to spread their presence in New England



4. DIFFERENT TOWNS

Salem

In September 1628, a new ship, the Abigail, arrived in North America but instead of Plymouth, John Endecott and his passengers landed at what was then known as Naumkeag. It had been founded two years prior by Roger Conant and his followers from Cape Ann in northern Massachusetts and the name was eventually changed to Salem – the town probably best known for its witch trials in the 1690s.

5. SPREADING OUT

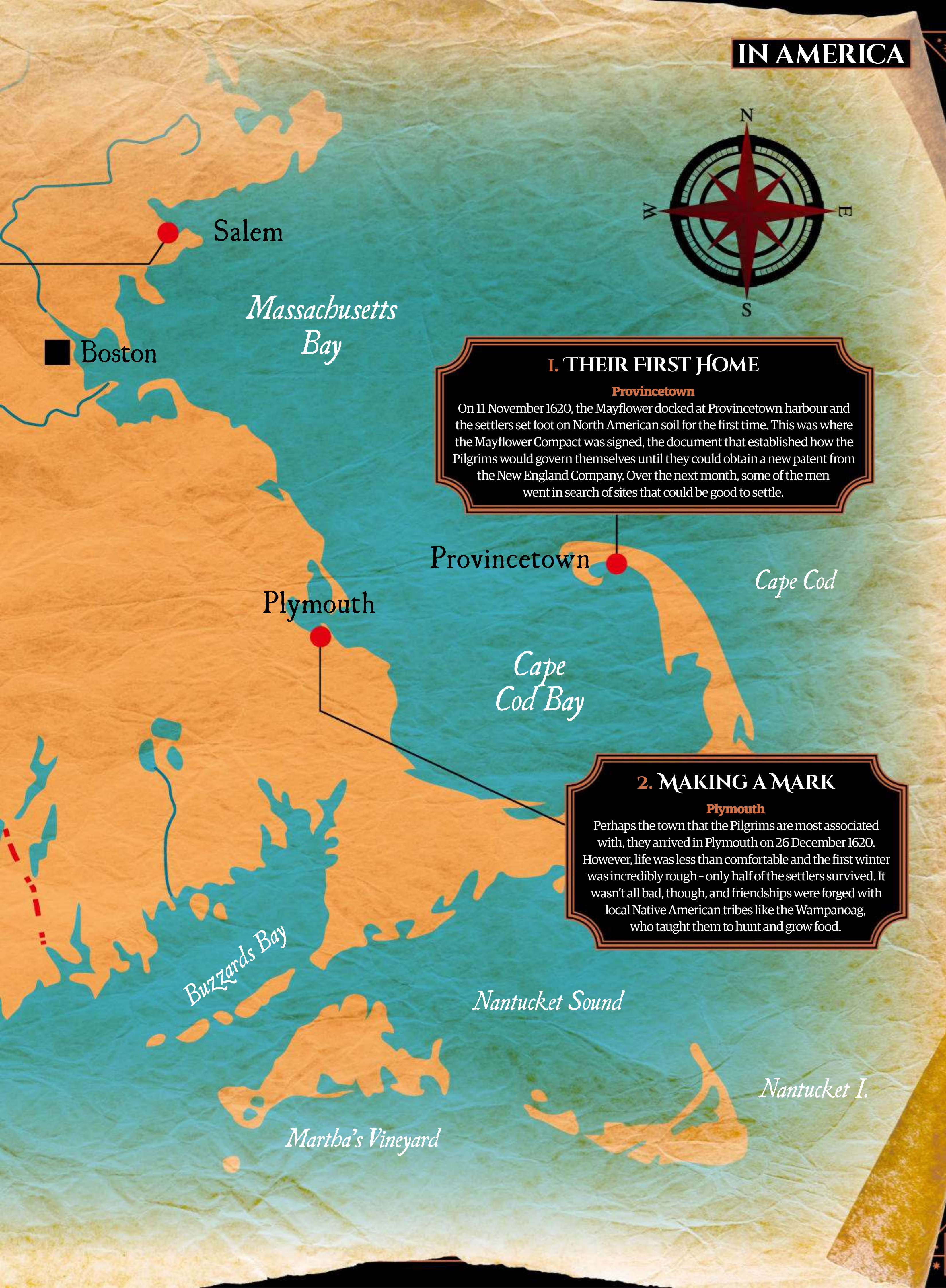
Duxburrow

In 1627, when the settlers had reached the end of their contract with their financial backers in London, they were given a plot of land each and stretched their way along the Massachusetts coastline. Some of these people moved to Duxborrow, now known as Duxbury, where they worked their farms in the warmer months and moved back to Plymouth for the winter. However, soon they demanded to be known as their own community with their own church. It was incorporated in 1637.

3. A NEW TRADING POST

Aptucxet, Cape Cod

The Pilgrims' first trading house was built at Aptucxet on the southwestern side of Cape Cod. The location was chosen thanks to its strategic advantages as it allowed the settlers to trade with Native Americans who lived in both Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay. However, the trading house was slow to turn a profit and so they began to look elsewhere. The trading house was destroyed in a hurricane in 1635 and never rebuilt.


N
W
E
S
Salem
Massachusetts Bay
Boston
Provincetown
Cape Cod
Plymouth
Cape Cod Bay
Buzzards Bay
Nantucket Sound
Nantucket I.
Martha's Vineyard

1. THEIR FIRST HOME

Provincetown

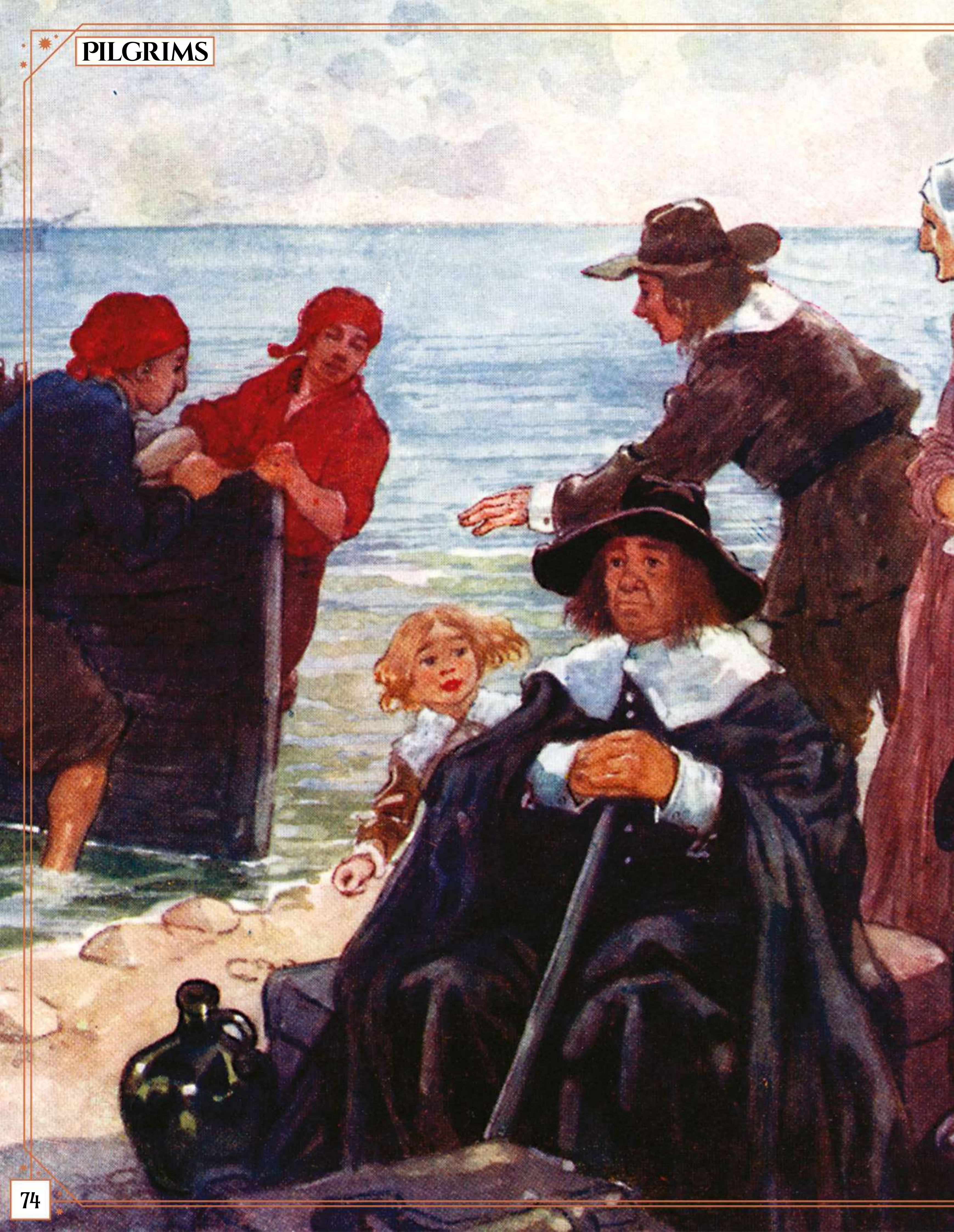
On 11 November 1620, the Mayflower docked at Provincetown harbour and the settlers set foot on North American soil for the first time. This was where the Mayflower Compact was signed, the document that established how the Pilgrims would govern themselves until they could obtain a new patent from the New England Company. Over the next month, some of the men went in search of sites that could be good to settle.

2. MAKING A MARK

Plymouth

Perhaps the town that the Pilgrims are most associated with, they arrived in Plymouth on 26 December 1620. However, life was less than comfortable and the first winter was incredibly rough – only half of the settlers survived. It wasn't all bad, though, and friendships were forged with local Native American tribes like the Wampanoag, who taught them to hunt and grow food.

Image Source • Getty Images



Main image Source ✷ Getty Images.

The expansion of Plymouth Colony

Between 1621 and 1640, the Plymouth Colony expanded with the founding of numerous settlements and struggled for economic viability

Written by Mike Haskew

Despite the difficulties of their first winter, the Pilgrims persevered. Life continued literally in the shadow of death. The company was originally divided into 19 households, and each of these was assigned a lot eight feet wide and 50 feet deep. Homes were constructed as and when labourers were able to work.

To conceal the severity of their losses from the Native Americans, whm they knew little about, the Pilgrims buried their dead at night, levelling their graves and quickly covering them with corn seed to hide them. Although there was sometimes vocal dissent, Pilgrim leader William Bradford wrote that these objections were overcome "by the wisdom, patience, and just and equal carriage of things by the Governor [John Carver] and better part, which clave faithfully together in the main."

When the Mayflower prepared to sail for England in April 1621, the captain offered to transport any person back to the mother country free of charge. Reportedly there were no takers. This may be interpreted variously as their dread of another passage across the untamed expanse of the Atlantic, the resolution of those Pilgrims who remained to see the enterprise through to success, or a combination of the two.

Succeeding Carver as governor and subsequently re-elected numerous times, William Bradford was the dominating political force in Plymouth Colony for a generation. The governor and the General Court levied taxes and dispensed the law, punishing petty criminals or offenders with fines. The first execution in English North America took place in 1630 when John Billington was found guilty of murder and publicly hanged.

By the autumn of 1621, the 53 Pilgrims who survived the early winter ordeal and nearly 100 Native Americans led by Massasoit, chief of the Pokanoket tribe and principal of the Wampanoag

Image Source ✱ Getty Images

Initially friendly, the Native population experienced theft and violence from the colonists, turning them against the Pilgrims

A reconstructed street and dwellings highlight the living history program at Plimoth Plantation near the original site of the colony

> "The governor and the General Court levied taxes and dispensed the law, punishing petty criminals with fines"

Nation, celebrated the feast now known as the first Thanksgiving. In November, a second ship, the Fortune, brought 37 new settlers, including former members of the Separatist congregation at Leiden in the Netherlands. However, they brought no provisions and increased the strain on the already tenuous food supply of the colony.

Ships continued to arrive intermittently, augmenting the population of Plymouth. In May 1622, the Sparrow brought seven representatives of the Plymouth Council for New England, successor to the Virginia Company, whose mission was to establish a new settlement. The Sparrow was followed that summer by two more ships with a total of 60 men who ventured north and founded a village named Wessagussett, near present-day Weymouth, Massachusetts. The Wessagussett settlement failed primarily due to starvation and the antagonistic relationship of its settlers with the Native Americans. The situation led to a military expedition under Myles Standish against a rumoured threat from hostile Native Americans.

After spending the months of July and August in Plymouth, the Wessagussett settlers had moved north, raising the ire of Native Americans in the area. About this time Chief Massasoit had become gravely ill. After he was nursed back to health by a group of Pilgrims, Massasoit warned that a Native American uprising aimed at wiping out the Wessagussett village was brewing. When Governor Bradford received word of the escalating tension, he dispatched Standish and a contingent of Plymouth militia to deal with the threat.

Standish found that no attack had occurred. Nevertheless, he treacherously lured five of the leaders of the belligerent Native Americans into a house with the promise of a meal of pork. Once inside, the men were set upon and two of them were murdered. One of those killed, Wituwamat had been an imposing figure. Physically large, he was said to have previously taunted Standish because the latter was a short man. He had also bragged of murdering French sailors who had survived a shipwreck sometime earlier.

By the time Standish had executed his deceitful assault, ten of the original 60 settlers of Wessagussett had already died of starvation and two had been killed in skirmishes with the Natives. Most of the survivors returned to Plymouth or moved north to Maine, eventually returning to England. Three men were either captured or had lived for a while among Natives of their own volition. These three were murdered in apparent

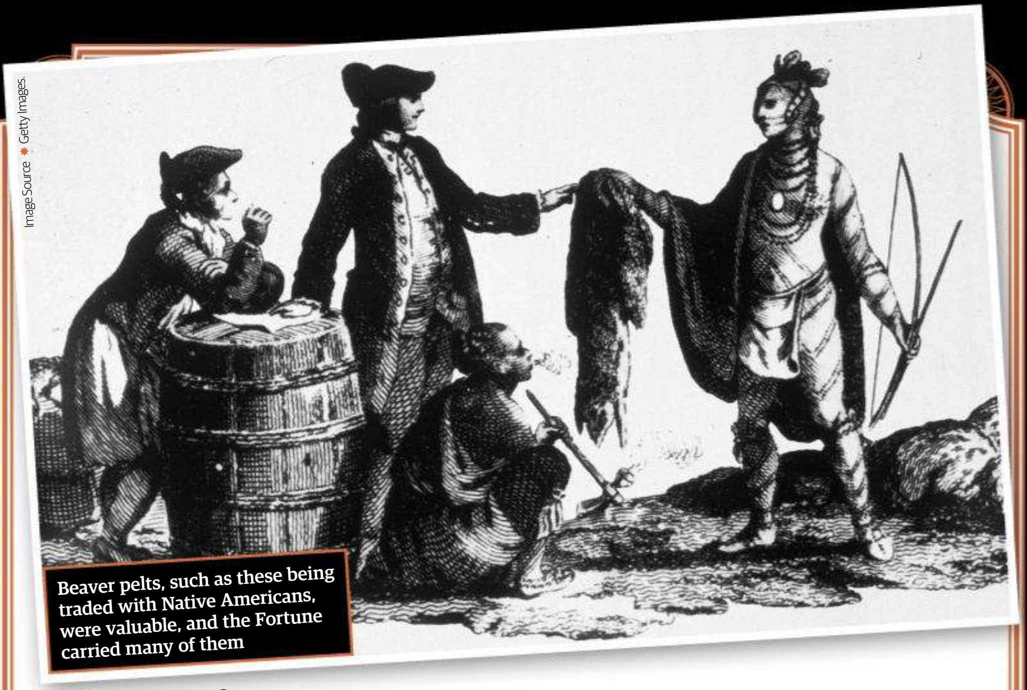


Image Source * Getty Images

Beaver pelts, such as these being traded with Native Americans, were valuable, and the Fortune carried many of them

A VOYAGE OF MISFORTUNE

The Pilgrims' failed attempt to pay their debts

One year after the Mayflower anchored at the future site of Plymouth Colony, the ship Fortune arrived with 37 more settlers. Remaining offshore for only about three weeks, the Fortune was made ready to sail on the return voyage to England and set out on 13 December 1621. Her holds were loaded with £500 worth of goods, including furs, timber and other commodities, for delivery to the Plymouth Council for New England in London in partial payment for the debt that was owed in exchange for the Pilgrims' original passage.

The Fortune's voyage was uneventful until the ship neared its destination. Rather than sailing into the English Channel, a navigation error sent the vessel toward the coastline of hostile France. The Fortune was captured by a French warship and its valuable cargo confiscated. Robert Cushman, who had negotiated the original deal with the Virginia Company for the Pilgrims' passage, was held in a prison on shore while the crew was held under guard aboard ship. The French detained the Fortune and her company for 13 days, and the unfortunate ship did not reach London until 17 February 1622. The loss of the valuable cargo was a major setback for the Pilgrims in the repayment of their debt, as they still had to pay off their sponsors.

reprisal for the 'Standish Incident'. These events eroded relations with the Native Americans in the area, disrupted the lucrative fur trade that had brought some promise of economic prosperity to Plymouth, and damaged the colony's prospects for the future. Although the military prowess of the Pilgrims was enhanced in the eyes of the Native Americans, these former economic partners were also frightened and scattered away from trading centres, causing an unintended financial hardship for Plymouth.

The town of Hull was soon established on the Nantasket Peninsula in 1622 originally named Kingston upon Hull. A year earlier Plymouth had built a small trading post to service the area. In July 1623, the ships Anne and Little James brought another 96 settlers to Plymouth. A large number of these passengers belonged to two distinct groups. One had previously struck an agreement with the Virginia Company for passage unencumbered by the indenture of the original Pilgrims to work and communally pool their products for shipment to England in payment for their own transport to the open arms of the New World. This group carried a letter from 13 of the Virginia Company's merchant investors, and the request was honoured. They were given land a mile south of Plymouth Rock in an area known as Hobs Hole near the mouth of the Eel River, and the settlement was later called Wellingsley. The second group was an odd collection of individuals that were either unsuitable for the rigours of life in America or that decided within a year of arrival to return to England.

Among those arriving aboard one of the ships at Plymouth, possibly the Anne or the Charity, was Roger Conant, who led a company of fishermen to Cape Ann and founded the town of Salem around 1629. Historians speculate that Conant had perhaps been motivated to leave Plymouth proper with a group of dissenters amid the unfolding of two major events related to the Puritan way of life.

Although he never set foot in North America, John Robinson had long served as spiritual leader of the Separatist Church, putting forth much of the doctrine that the followers embraced and serving as pastor to the congregation in the Netherlands. When word reached Plymouth that Robinson had died, some of his Separatist followers began to question their future prospects. Had the difficult journey and the struggle to survive and thrive produced the resulting religious-centred society they had intended to build?

During this time John Lyford, a minister who supposedly sympathised with the Pilgrims' strict religious perspective, arrived in Plymouth. However, several letters Lyford wrote to leaders of the Church of England were intercepted, and he was confronted as to his true intentions regarding the Separatist cause. Lyford was banished from Plymouth after it was revealed that he'd been secretly meeting with colonists who might want to return to the Anglican Church and even leave Plymouth Colony for England. Several of his associates were subjected to harsh punishment and also expelled from the Plymouth Colony.

In the autumn of 1623 another ship arrived with settlers commissioned to revive the already failed colony at Weymouth. In 1629, a ship named the Mayflower (not the famous 1620 passage vessel), in company with the Lyon, reached Salem, and another 35 settlers made the final leg of their journey to Plymouth over land. In 1630 the Handmaid brought 60 more settlers.

By 1624, the population of the colony had grown to 124, and in 1637 it totalled 549. Over the next 20 years, nine new towns were founded within the colony. However, in 1630 the neighbouring Massachusetts Bay Colony had also been founded under the leadership of Governor John Winthrop. In time, the growth of Plymouth would slow, eclipsed by the influx of settlers to the northern settlements. The first group of 1,000 Puritans who came to the New World with Winthrop under a charter from the Massachusetts Bay Company sought to reform the Protestant movement and the Anglican church itself within the English realm, unlike the Separatists who chose to remove themselves from it, and saw their new colony as a "city on a hill," its seat of government established at Boston, a nascent city of increasing importance.

After early efforts to pay their debt to the Plymouth Council for New England through a communal policy that brought all goods under central authority and employed an economic policy of "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need," the communal system was dropped in 1623 due to lack of production. Thereafter, the settlers were given an acre of land and allowed to plant and tend their own fields, trading surplus crops. Production increased, and the prosperity of the colony improved. The following year, Edward Winslow returned to Plymouth from England with a patent to establish a fishing location at Cape Ann and the first cattle in the colony, three heifers and a bull.

In 1625, English lawyer and trader Thomas Morton and his associate Captain Richard Wollaston found themselves unable to remain in Plymouth under strict Puritan religious and legal authority. They founded a settlement called Mount Wollaston on the site of modern Quincy, Massachusetts. Morton and his followers soon took to offending the Puritan authorities with raucous celebrations that included the Maypole festivities, and attempted to establish a competing fur trade with the Native Americans. Myles Standish led a force to arrest Morton, and the offender was eventually sent back to England to be tried for illegally trading weapons with Natives. Morton later returned to New England and continued to criticise the Puritan perspective.

At Aptucxet on the western edge of Cape Cod, the Pilgrims established their first trading post in 1626. Trading with the Wampanoag people and the Dutch, they obtained foodstuffs and established a fur trade that was significant in repaying the debt to the Plymouth Council, which was finally extinguished in 1627, allowing the settlers to further expand trade with Native tribes and other European enclaves. In 1628, a second trading post was established on the eastern shore of the Kennebunk River near present-day Augusta, Maine, and the following year a third trading post began operating on the Penobscot

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

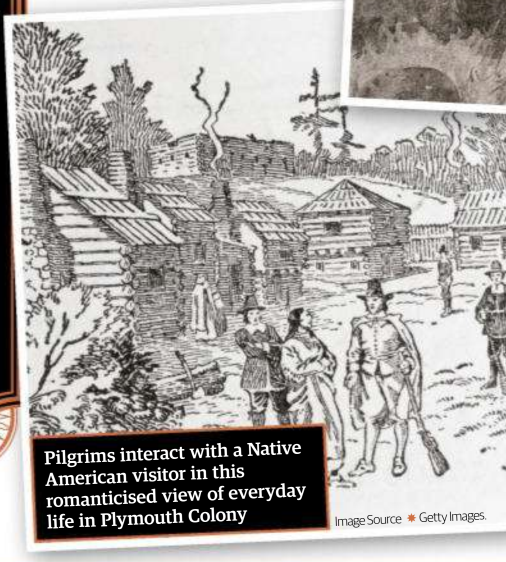

Pilgrims interact with a Native American visitor in this romanticised view of everyday life in Plymouth Colony

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

THE TROUBLE WITH BILLINGTONS

Capital punishment comes to Plymouth

John Billington, his wife Elinor, and their two sons, Francis and John Jr, sailed aboard the Mayflower in 1620. The father was a signer of the Mayflower Compact and led, according to William Bradford, "one of the profanest families amongst them…" The Billingtons were a family of agitators, and the trouble began even before the Pilgrims set foot in Massachusetts. Francis Billington made small explosive devices called squibs and discharged a musket while aboard ship.

In March 1621, the father challenged the military authority of Myles Standish, speaking against him numerous times and reportedly being punished for it. Young John became lost in the forest two months later. Found by Native Americans of the Nauset tribe, his release was secured after the Pilgrims agreed to replenish corn they had pilfered from Nauset caches. In 1624, the father was implicated in a church scandal but never punished. The following year he was identified as a slanderer of Robert Cushman, the Pilgrims' agent in London. In 1630, he shot John Newcomen, with whom he had some unidentified dispute. Billington was tried and hanged for the murder. Six years after her husband's death, Elinor was sentenced to sitting in the stocks and a whipping for slandering colonist John Doane.

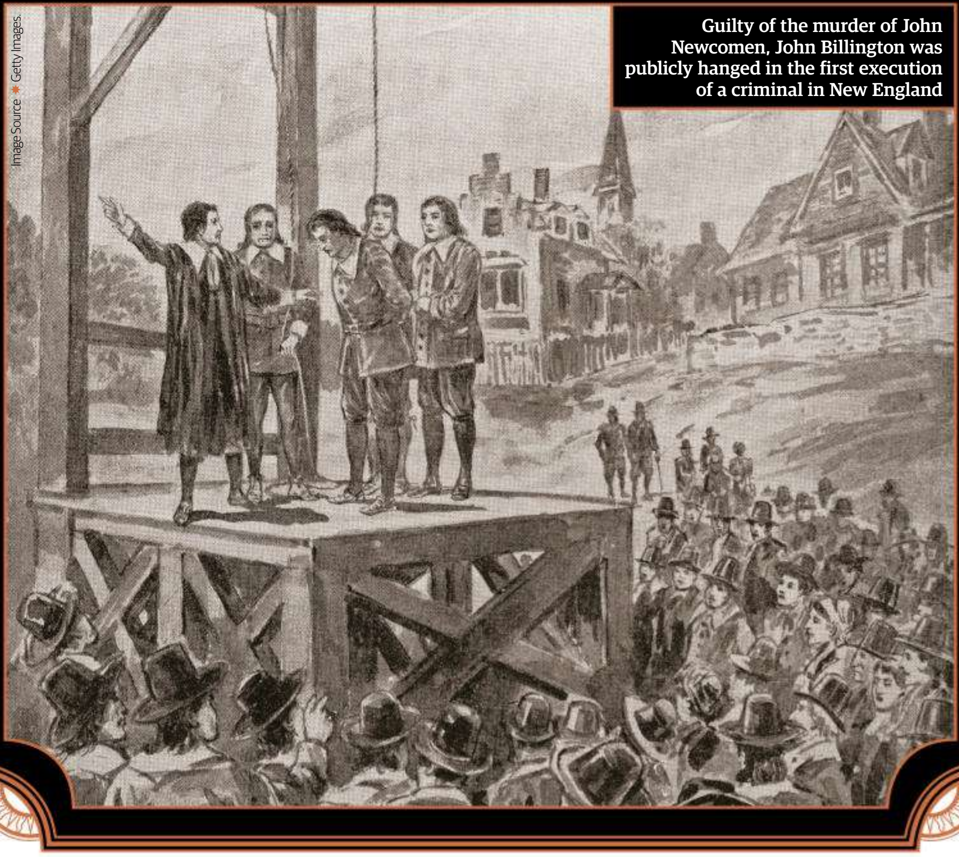


Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Guilty of the murder of John Newcomen, John Billington was publicly hanged in the first execution of a criminal in New England

River near the site of modern Castine, Maine. Yet another trading location was established at Manianuck on the Connecticut River, the future site of the town of Windsor, Connecticut, in 1633.

Soon enough, however, the Puritans and settlers of Massachusetts Bay Colony sought to take advantage of the brisk trade opportunities. When Massachusetts Bay established its own trading posts, the rivalry with the Plymouth settlers strained relations. With the coming of the Pequot War in 1636, Plymouth Colony lost nearly all of its once bustling trade centres. Although the leaders of Plymouth decried the aggressive stance that Massachusetts Bay took against the Native Americans, they were compelled to join with Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut in the New England Confederation in 1643 for mutual defence against a growing threat as white encroachment brought more friction.

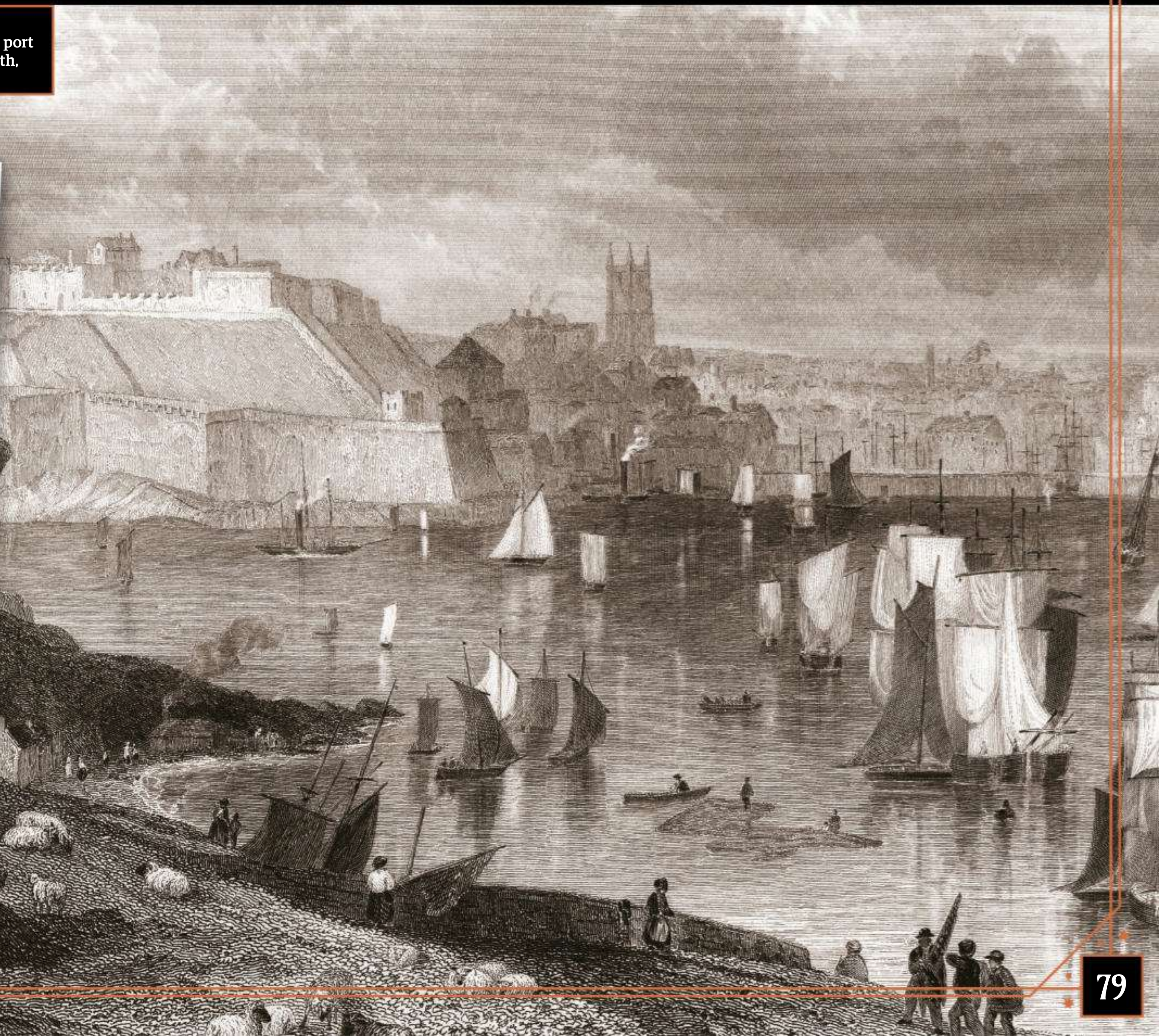
The economy diversified somewhat with the introduction of lumber and cattle trades, but the English Civil War and related Puritan successes back home slowed the pace of immigration to New England, causing prices to plunge. The colony suffered, particularly in context with the growing wealth and power of Massachusetts Bay.

During the years of population growth, the Plymouth Colony gradually grew in territory. In 1627, after the agreement with the Council requiring the Pilgrims to live in a close-knit community had ended, the colony's major assets were distributed among the settlers, including livestock and acreage. New lands on the Atlantic coast from Plymouth northward were allotted to settlers for cultivation, agriculture and homesteads. Towns such as Duxbury, Scituate, Taunton, Sandwich, and Barnstable were incorporated during the 1620s and 1630s. The settlement of Windsor was founded in 1633 and later became part of the colony of Connecticut. In 1637, a group of ten men from the village of Saugus near Boston received permission from the Plymouth government to found the hamlet of Sandwich on the southwestern shore of Cape Cod.

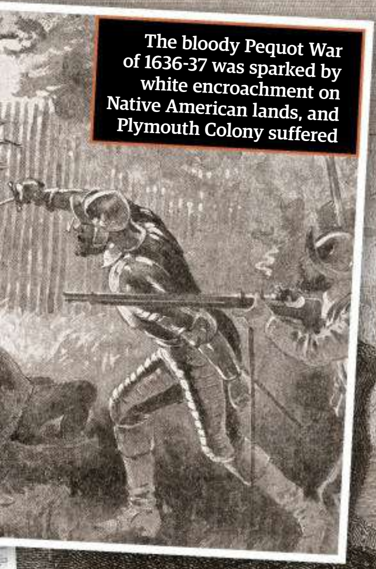
The population of New England grew significantly from the spring of 1634 through the end of the decade, and roughly 15 per cent of the immigrants to the region arrived between 1620 and 1633. The majority of these did not settle in Plymouth. In 1639, Plymouth Colony and Massachusetts Bay established a boundary just over 25 miles northwest of the Plymouth town. The colony itself stretched from the tip of Cape Cod in the east beyond Taunton in the west, roughly 81 miles, and by the mid-17th century Plymouth had reached its zenith.

> "At Aptucxet on the western edge of Cape Cod, the Pilgrims established their first trading post in 1626"

Image Source * Getty Images



The Pilgrims named their New World home Plymouth after the port of their final departure, Plymouth, Devon, England, shown here



The bloody Pequot War of 1636-37 was sparked by white encroachment on Native American lands, and Plymouth Colony suffered

Salem's founding father

Roger Conant was one of the more moderate elements among the original Pilgrims. He distanced himself from them even before sailing for the New World, where he founded the settlement of Salem

Written by April Madden

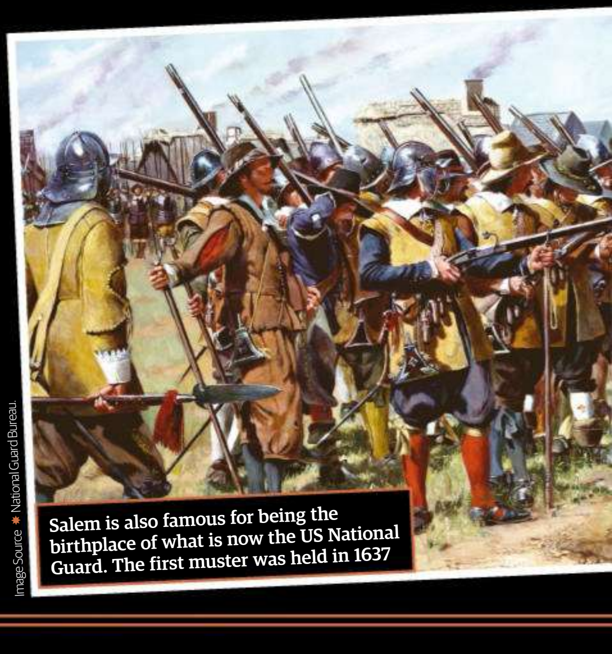
In 1626 a company of fishermen arrived at the mouth of the Naumkeag River, once the site of an abandoned Native American village and trading post. The fishermen were English colonists from the settlement of Cape Ann, to the north. They were led by one Roger Conant, an Englishman from the West Country. Conant, a drysalter by trade (which meant he dealt in a wide range of chemicals and preserved foods, not just salt), had arrived in the New World less than three years previously. He was not the typical Puritan Pilgrim. Having left the Plymouth Colony shortly after arriving in New England, finding it fanatical, overly dogmatic and downright violent (friends of his were beaten and expelled from the settlement for disagreeing with its self-appointed leaders) he headed north to Cape Ann. There, he came across another case of New England intractability in an altercation with Plymouth Colony's hot-tempered military captain, the famous Myles Standish. By the time Conant and his men arrived at what would become Salem Town and Salem Village, all they wanted was to find somewhere quiet where they and their families could live, work, and pray in peace, away from the fractious society of their fellow colonists. They found it on the Naumkeag River, and settled there, with Conant as the head of their community.

> The founder of Salem wanted the new town to be a peaceful refuge from the rest of the fractious New England colonies

Two years later, the Massachusetts Bay Company, the sponsors of the New England colonies, sent another group of settlers to the same area, led by John Endecott, who was their choice for governor when the new settlement was officially chartered in 1629. The moderate Conant gracefully gave way, and the two communities of colonists settled down amicably – so amicably, in fact, that the name of their settlement was changed to Salem, derived from the Hebrew word 'shalom'. The founders' meaning was clear: in the midst of the belligerent Plymouth Colony, Conant and his associates had created a city of peace.

Conant built the first house in Salem, on what today is Essex Street, opposite the town market. That no longer stands, but the home his son built in the nearby town of Beverly does. The Exercise Conant House (unfortunately for him, he was the only one of Roger Conant's children to be given a stereotypically Puritan name) bears a plaque paying tribute to him, saying that Roger Conant "was a prudent and religious man who led the old planters from Gloucester to Salem in 1626, and held them together until the Bay Colony was founded".

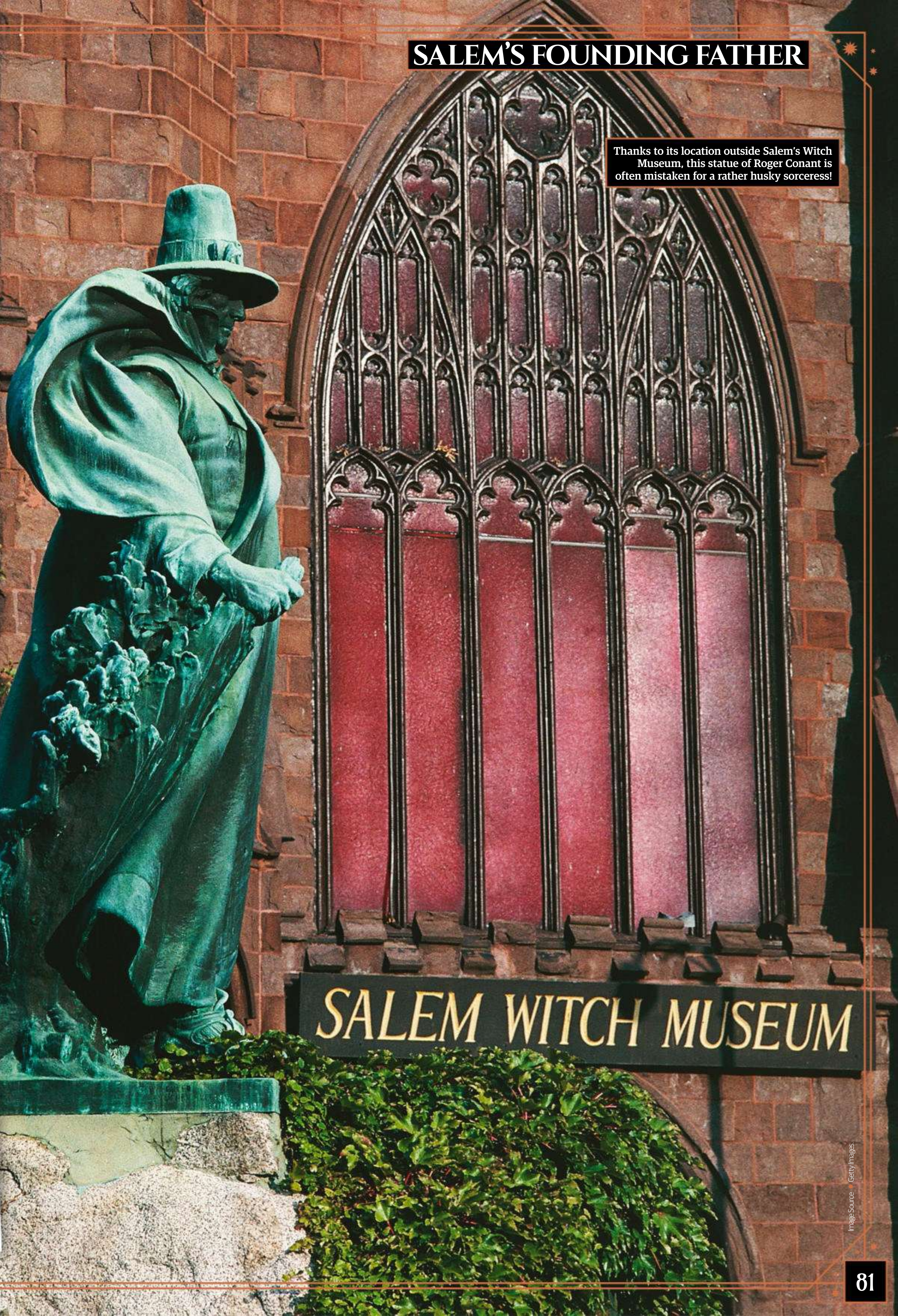
Roger Conant died in 1669. Fortunately, he never got to see the hate, avarice and torment that the witch trials unleashed on his peaceful little settlement just a generation later.



Salem is also famous for being the birthplace of what is now the US National Guard. The first muster was held in 1637

Image Source ✱ National Guard Bureau.

SALEM'S FOUNDING FATHER



Thanks to its location outside Salem's Witch Museum, this statue of Roger Conant is often mistaken for a rather husky sorceress!

Image Source / Getty Images

The governor of New England

How Anglican Sir Edmund Andros went from being revered by King James II to despised by Puritans all over New England…

Written by Poppy-Jay Palmer

The son of the bailiff of Guernsey, Sir Edmund Andros was born into his career. When his father, Amice Andros, passed away in 1674, Andros succeeded him in his post and acquired their family home of Sausmarez Manor. However, he didn't stay in Guernsey for long: well connected, he was soon appointed to be the first proprietary governor of New York by James II, who at the time was the Duke of York.

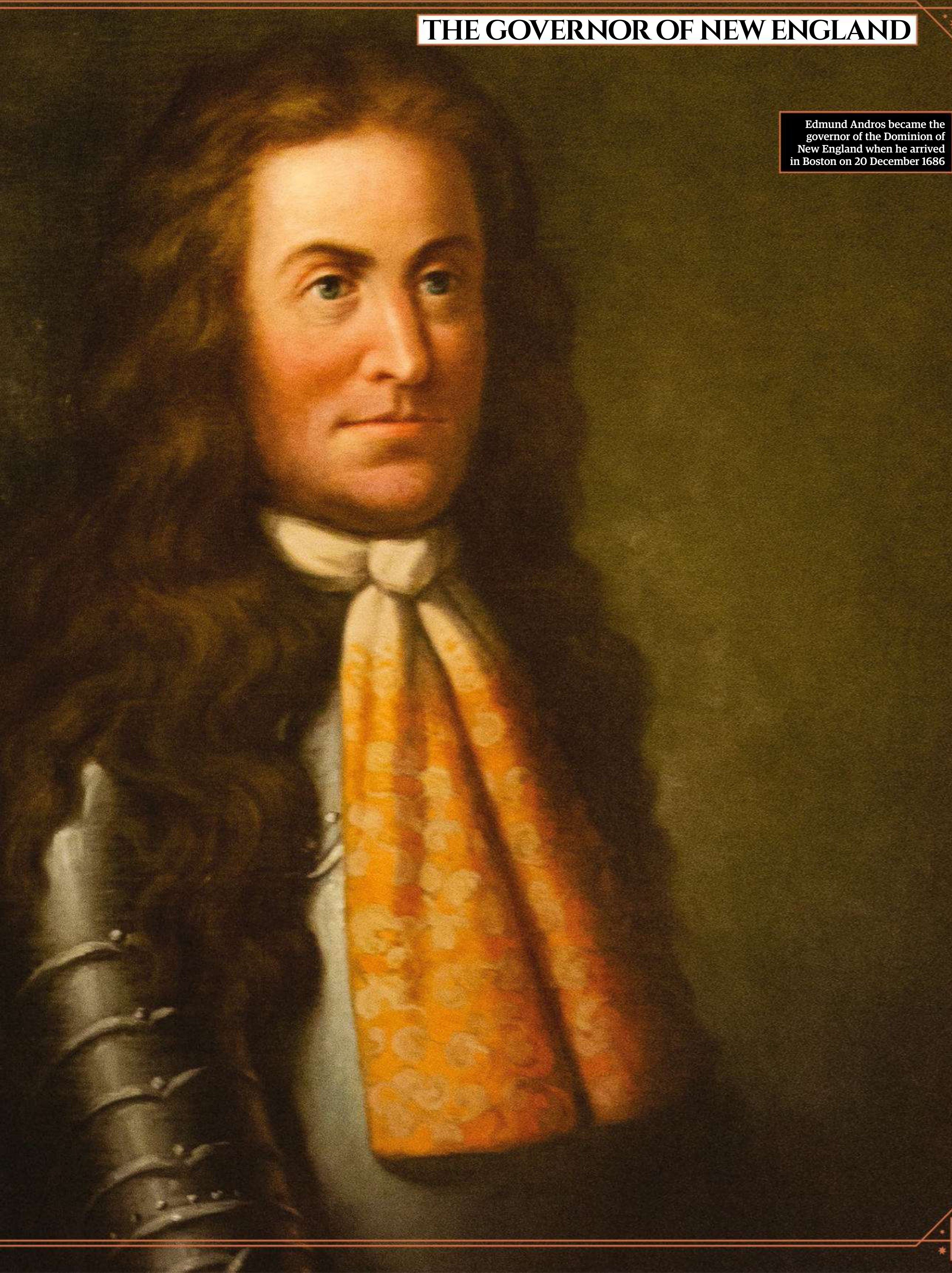
The impact Andros made in as the governor of New York was widely regarded as effective, and his actions were deeply praised by the monarchs and governments that appointed him. He was even knighted when he returned to England for a year in 1677. Following his work in New York, Andros moved on to serve as a governor in the provinces of East and West Jersey, Virginia and Maryland. But although Andros was commended by some, he was condemned by others. He managed to gain enemies, and several prominent figures even attempted to have him removed from public office.

> The colony was not supposed to be able to pass capital punishment sentences without ratification of Andros' charter

Andros' political opponents brought a number of charges against him to the Duke of York, including accusing him of favouring Dutch businessmen and engaging in business for his own gain rather than in the name of the duke. The accusations were enough to persuade the duke to order Andros back to England in 1681 to explain himself.

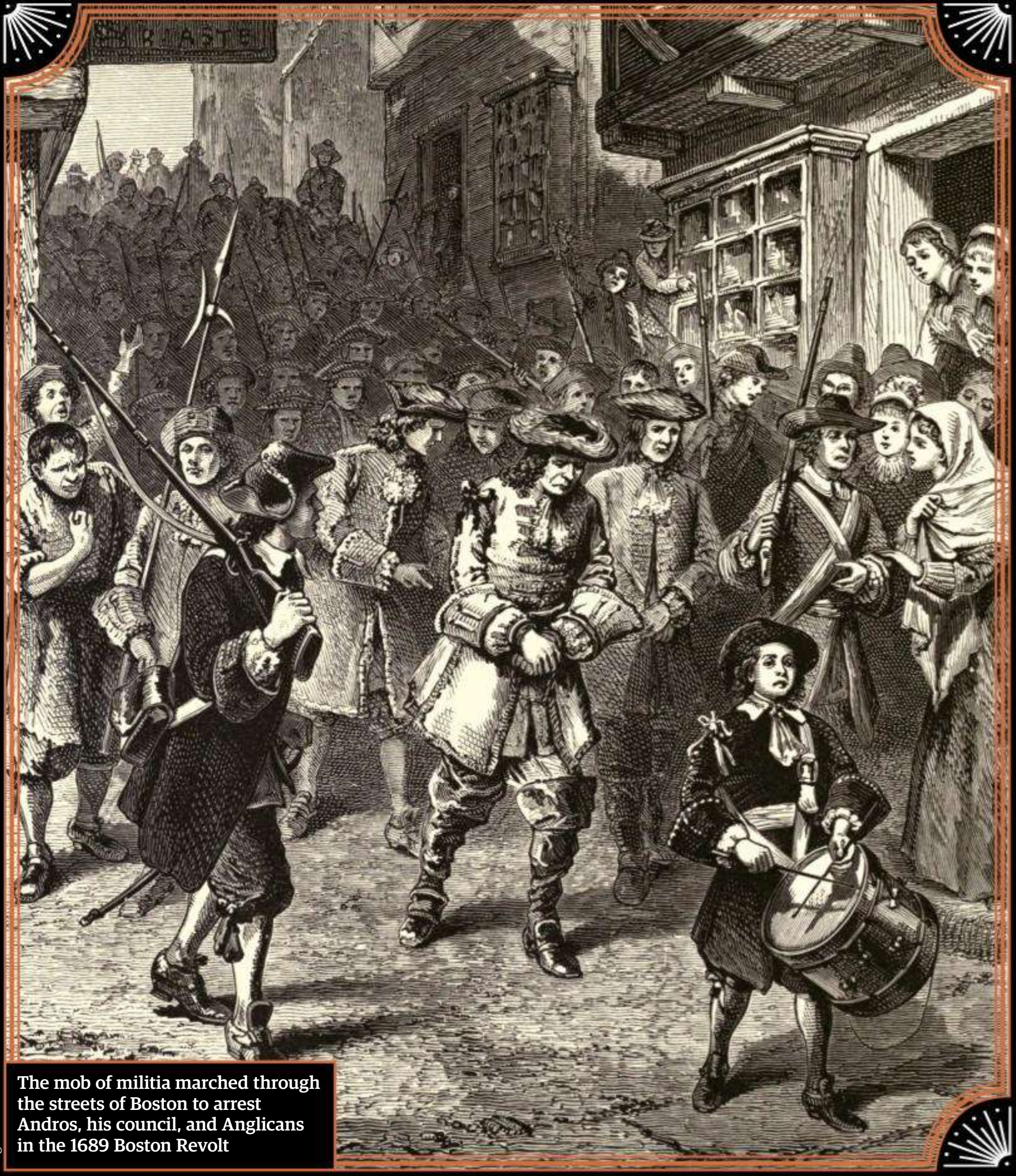
The controversy surrounding Andros endured for the rest of his career. In 1686, Andros found himself appointed the governor of the Dominion of New England, assuming power as soon as he set foot in Boston. He governed by himself with a council serving alongside him, which was initially made up of representatives from each of the colonies absorbed by the dominion. However, the nuisance of travel and the fact that travel expenses weren't reimbursed meant that the council quickly became dominated by representatives from Massachusetts and Plymouth.

Although he was relatively successful while serving in New York, Andros was met with hostility from the people of New England, for a number of reasons. To start with, New England's charter was being redrawn at the time that he was appointed governor, and so some things – including the right to determine capital punishment – were technically supposed to go



Edmund Andros became the governor of the Dominion of New England when he arrived in Boston on 20 December 1686

Image Source ✸ Creator:Frederick Stone Batcheller (1837-1889).



The mob of militia marched through the streets of Boston to arrest Andros, his council, and Anglicans in the 1689 Boston Revolt

Image Source ✱ William A Crafts.

"Although Andros' new colonial charter was law, some colonies resisted it"

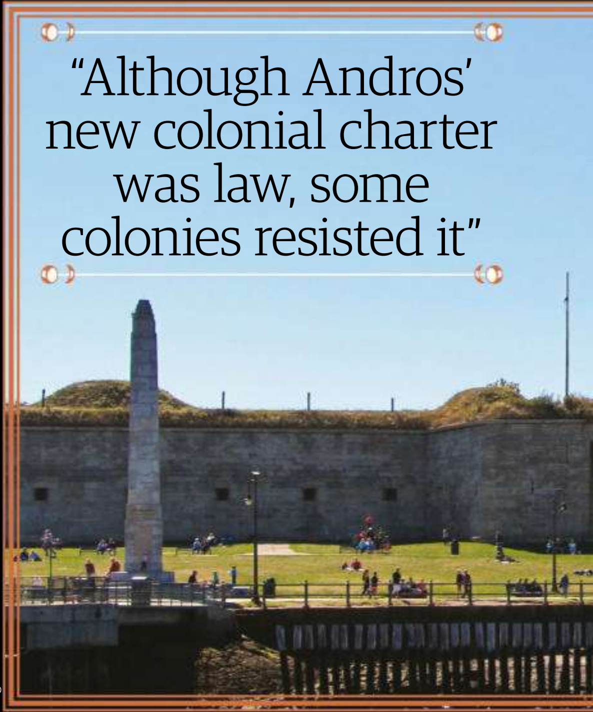


Image Source ✱ Robert Linsdell from St Andrews, Canada.

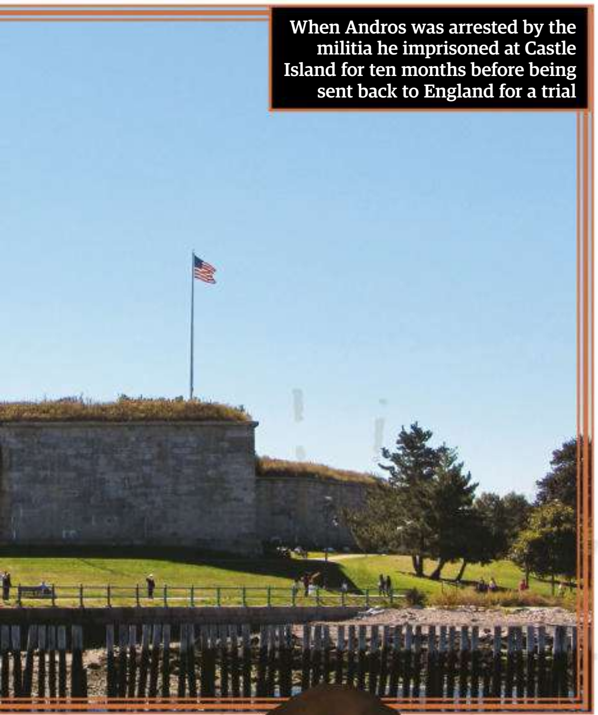
back to the English courts. This meant that the residents of New England weren't supposed to be able to sentence someone to death, or certainly not without independent judicial oversight from a representative of the British crown. Not happy with this, some New Englanders began to rebel.

The pro-Anglican views he brought with him also made Andros less than favourable in the famously Puritan region. Shortly after arriving in Boston, he asked each of the city's Puritan churches if their meetinghouses could be used for the services of the Church of England. His requests were quickly rejected. Not taking no for an answer, he demanded the keys to Samuel Willard's Third Church and began to hold services there. As a result, New England's Puritans accused him of being involved in a Popish plot.

Andros also lost favour with Massachusetts' farmers when it came to his laws regarding revenue. Upon arriving in the region, Andros' council made it a priority to harmonise dominion and English laws, but the process took far longer than expected. As a way of keeping order, Andros issued a proclamation in March 1687 that stated that all of New England's pre-existing laws would stay in effect until they could be properly revised. However, Massachusetts didn't have any laws about tax, and so Andros and his council created a taxation scheme that would apply to the entirety of the Dominion of New England. Naturally, people had something to say about it, particularly the area's farmers, who felt that the taxes on livestock were set far too high. To make matters even worse, the council also decided to hike up the import duties on alcohol in an attempt to bring in immediate revenue. Joining the farmers in their disgruntlement, other Massachusetts communities started to resist the laws, with some towns even refusing to elect commissioners, causing officials to be arrested, taken to Boston and imprisoned until they swore to carry out their duties. When finally forced to pay taxes, landowners all over New England were hit hard, and Andros and his council were most unpopular than ever.

The New England communities resisted Andros and the English laws that he represented, and rebelled against both

With rising pressure from his superiors, Andros was tasked with bringing New England's land title practices in line with England, and introduced quit-rents as a result. At the time, many titles issued under the colonial administration in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine suffered from form defects, and land grants in Connecticut and Rhode Island had been made before either had a charter, resulting in conflicting claims being a regular occurrence. As many landowners' titles were dubious, Andros' solution to the problems ended up being extremely divisive. Fearing losing their land, many people flat-out refused to go through the confirmation process and viewed it as Andros attempting to steal any land he could get his hands on. Landowners of Massachusetts suffered the most: as all land titles in that colony had been granted under a now-defunct charter, Andros declared them to be void. Though they tried to resist, landowners were forced to



When Andros was arrested by the militia he imprisoned at Castle Island for ten months before being sent back to England for a trial

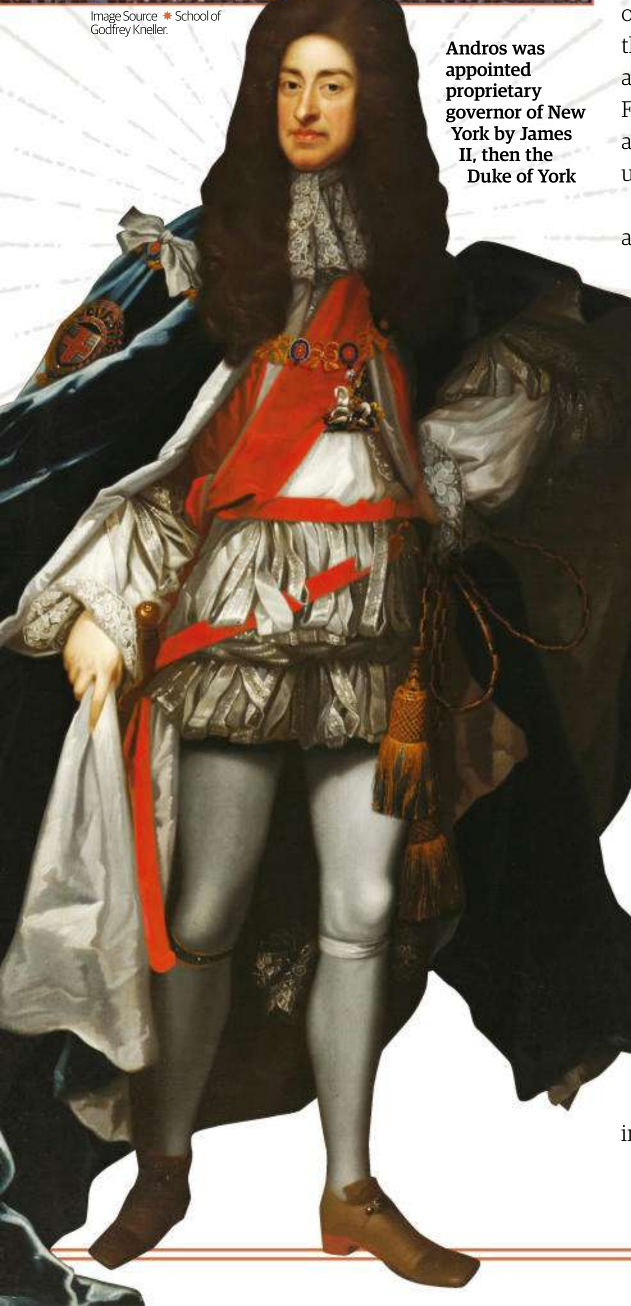


Image Source ✷ School of Godfrey Kneller.

Andros was appointed proprietary governor of New York by James II, then the Duke of York

re-certify their ownership over their land, pay fees and become subject to quit-rent.

Though Andros' new colonial charter was law in New England, some colonies resisted it as much as they could. And when the news of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the overthrow of James II reached Boston, the people of New England started getting ideas of their own. Unwilling to put up with Andros' views and actions any longer, the colonists of Boston rose up against his rule, kickstarting what is now known as the 1689 Boston Revolution.

Starting on 18 April 1689, a mob of provincial militia and citizens met at Charlestown and Roxbury, boarding boats to cross the Charles River and marching across Roxbury's neck into the mainland to meet in the heart of the city. The mob quickly drew a crowd, arrested dominion officials and took Boston Anglicans into custody before surrounding Fort Mary, Andros' place of residence. Andros was urged to surrender for his own safety by ex-Governor Simon Bradstreet, but he went against advice and attempted to escape on the HMS Rose. His plan didn't quite work out though, as militia had already captured its captain and intercepted the ship, forcing Andros back into Fort Mary. After some lengthy negotiations and a meeting with the council, Andros was placed under arrest.

At first, Andros was held under close watch at Fort Mary along with several other dominion officials, but was eventually moved to Castle Island, a peninsula in South Boston on the shore of Boston Harbour, and held under close watch. During his time on Castle Island Andros made several attempts at fleeing, but he was always discovered and recaptured. One attempt ended with him making it all the way to Rhode Island after the servants bribed the sentries with liquor, but he was discovered and returned to Castle Island and kept in virtual solitary confinement. It was also believed that he had tried to escape his fortress by dressing in women's clothing, but the story was quickly dispelled by Anglican minister Robert Ratcliff, who insisted that it was a lie created to make Andros seem even more odious to his people.

Andros was held in the militia's custody for ten months before being sent back to England to be put on trial. Much to the disgruntlement of the residents of New England, the Massachusetts agents based in London refused to sign the document listing the charges being held against Andros. He was acquitted and freed, and sent back to the colonies to serve as governor of Virginia and Maryland.

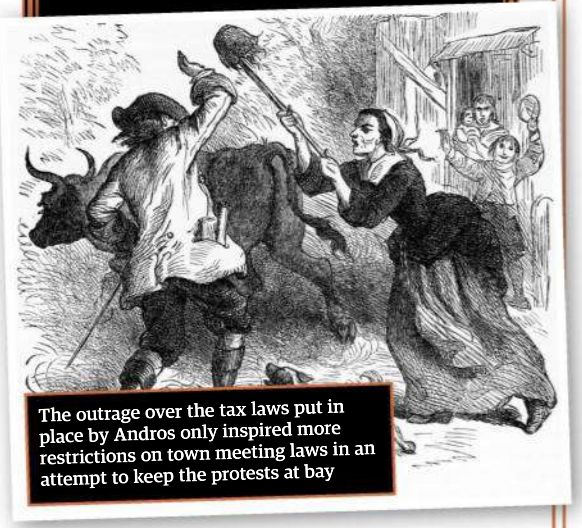
Though Andros had mostly been despised in the colonies, he was revered in England, and so governed his new colonies in much the same way. Settling at Middle Plantation, the future-Williamsburg, he worked towards organising the provincial records, promoted laws that were designed to prevent slave rebellions, and attempted to boost Virginia's economy, encouraging new crops like cotton and flax.

In 1698, Andros was finally recalled back to England and resumed his post as bailiff of Guernsey. In 1704, he was appointed the lieutenant governor of the island by Queen Anne, and served in that position for four years before retiring and dying in 1714. Even now, Andros remains a notorious figure in New England's history, and Connecticut officially excluded him from its list of colonial governors.

MEETING NOW IN SESSION

During his time as the governor of the Dominion of New England, Edmund Andros introduced a number of town meeting laws in order to better control the area and the people that despised him. The new laws meant that towns were not only limited to hosting a single meeting ever year, but that the one meeting had to be solely for the purpose of electing officials for their locale. All other meetings held for any other reason were strictly banned.

The restrictions began as a consequence of the protests against Andros and his council's new tax laws, seeing as town meetings were where the protests against the situation had begun. Obviously, the town meeting laws were met with rage at the loss of local power, and not at all as successful as Andros had hoped they would be in keeping himself in his citizens' good books. His political tactic backfired somewhat when the colonists began to protest against those as well. Many saw both the tax laws and the town meeting laws to be in violation of the Magna Carta, which guaranteed taxation by representatives of the people – "no taxation without representation".



The outrage over the tax laws put in place by Andros only inspired more restrictions on town meeting laws in an attempt to keep the protests at bay

Image Source ✷ Getty Images.

King William's War

How the deadly conflict between the English and the French – and their respective indigenous allies – created a level of hysteria that influenced the tragic outcome of the Salem witch trials…

Written by Poppy-Jay Palmer

After emerging from the Franco-Dutch War in 1678 as the most powerful monarch in Europe, King Louis XIV of France's influence and popularity rapidly dwindled in the years that followed. Not content with his new status, he made an attempt to pressure the Holy Roman Empire into bowing to his territorial claims by crossing the Rhine and kickstarting his third major conflict. The Nine Years' War (1688-1697), also known as the War of the Grand Alliance and the War of the League of Augsberg, saw Louis and an army of soldiers take on a European coalition of the Holy Roman Empire made up of Spain, England, Savoy, the Dutch Republic and its leader, Austria. Often considered the first global war, the Nine Years' War reached further than just Europe: North America was dragged into the conflict for its duration. Its effect on the people of New England was great, and even went on to play a major part in the hysteria that plagued the Salem witch trials.

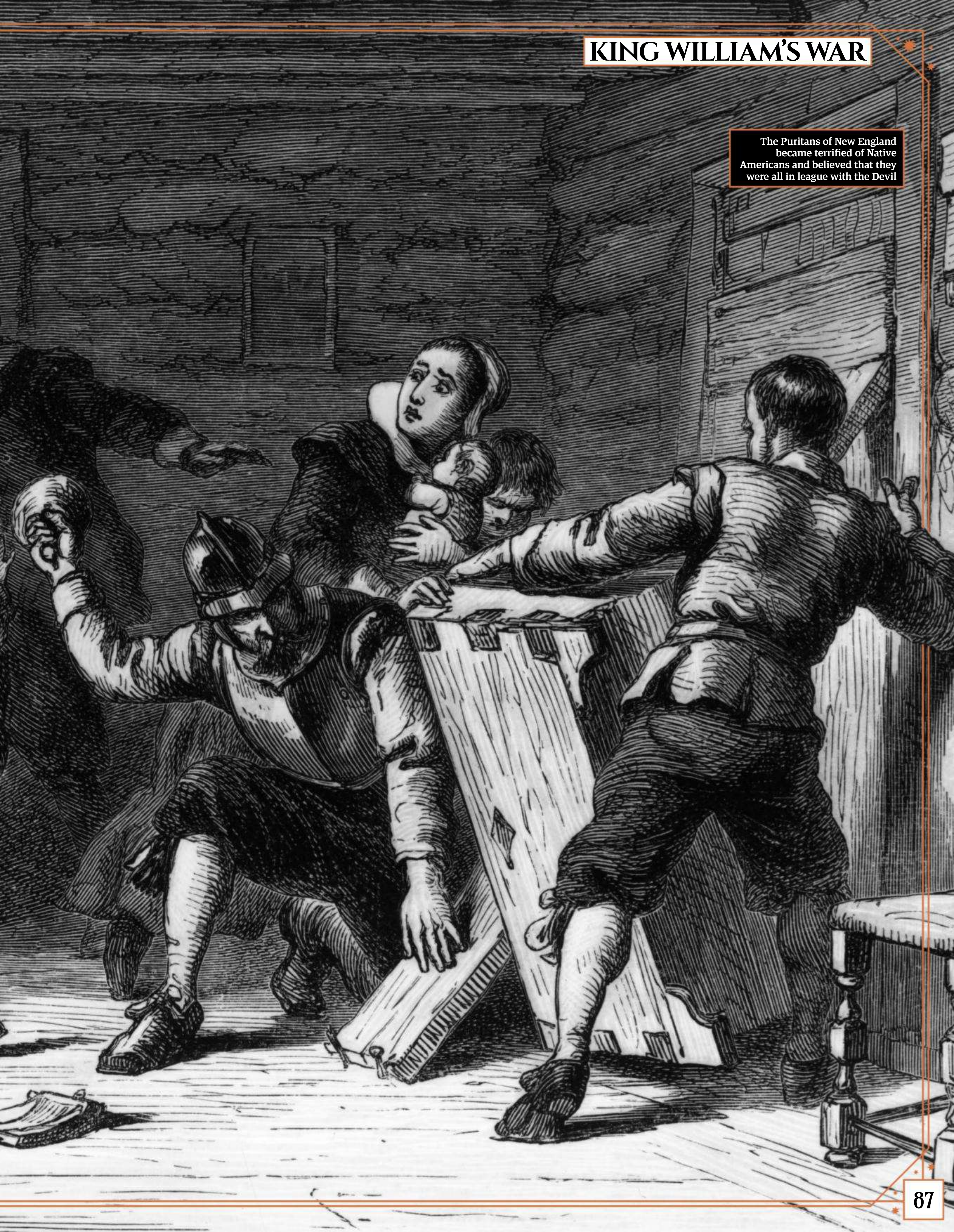
King William's War, the North American theatre of the Nine Years' War, was the first of six colonial wars that were fought between New England and New France alongside each's indigenous allies until 1763, when France finally surrendered its mainland territories east of the Mississippi River.

Before the start of the conflict, British and French settlers in America were already having issues. The treaties and agreements that had been made at the end of King Philip's War, which ran from 1675 until 1678, weren't being adhered to and most people were angry, with frontier settlements constantly fighting for trading rights and claims over territories. On top of that, no one had really known what the Native Americans were doing: they had played the English and manipulated their fears by making it look like they were working with the French, and they played the French, who thought they were on the side of the English. People could only be pushed so far, so as soon as news of the Nine Years' War reached North America, the new war began in full force.

With the English and their indigenous Iroquois allies going up agains the French and their Abenaki allies, King William's War suddenly mirrored the events of the brutal war that was going on in Europe. While King William III and his armies teamed up with the Netherlands in an attempt to stop the French from pushing back and expanding into more of Europe, the French had lost some leverage in North America. They had previously been in a position of power as the region's primary trade partners with the Iroquois, a mighty northeast Native American confederacy, but that all changed when the English arrived; their goods were both cheaper and of a higher quality than those of the French, so they swiftly gained the Iroquois' favour. Both fearful and jealous of the English-Iroquois alliance, the French began to get desperate. However, the English weren't the only ones allied with a native tribe – they were just as fearful of the Abenaki, Native American and First Nation people from New England and Canada's Quebec and the Maritime Provences, who stood with France and a small number of other Native American groups.

Not content with their new position of power in North America, the English finally decided they wanted to expand into Canada, much to French disdain. In the summer months of 1688, English settlers started to head to the most northern part of New England and built forts and settlements there, but it wasn't long before they fell victim to brutal attacks from their opposition. The Abenaki decided

Image Source * Getty Images.



The Puritans of New England became terrified of Native Americans and believed that they were all in league with the Devil to push back the line of white settlements through a campaign of devastating raids on villages and farmhouses, and there wasn't much the English could do about it. Although they had gathered an army of around 1000 soldiers, the English didn't actually start to fight back until spring. Over the two years that followed, the English/Iroquois alliance and the French/Abenaki alliance continued fighting, coming up against each other in frequent raids and battles.

One of the French and Abenaki's greatest victories came in 1690 when they successfully carried out three deadly raids in under four mouths. The Schenectady massacre, which was in retaliation for the Lachine massacre from the Iroquois forces, saw 200 soldiers attack the village of Schenectady in the colony of New York and ended with a death toll of 60 and almost 30 more being taken captive. The French/Abenaki's raid on Salmon Falls ended with the Maine village being destroy and most of its residents killed or taken prisoner. As a response to the raids, the English/Iroquois alliance invaded Canada by sea. Sir William Phips of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and his men captured Port Royal in May 1690, and very nearly succeeded in an assault on Quebec soon after, but they were blindsided by the French, who took back Port Royal the following year.

The war was very back-and-forth, with both sides continuing to initiate raids and skirmishes but neither celebrating any real victories. It looked like the only way forward would be to have all parties agree on a truce, and by November 1691 the Abenaki were actually tired enough to sign a treaty with the English. However, the treaty was very short lived, with the Abenaki completely ignoring its terms by raiding the town of York, Maine, towards the start of 1692.

Even with the attempt at peace the war was far from over, and ended up becoming nothing more than a bloodbath. The French won another big victory in 1693 after a string of successful raids on various Iroquois villages that saw the capture of around 300 Iroquois Indians. But after that, the raids and battles started to settle down for a while, with neither side taking any significant victories for the four years that followed.

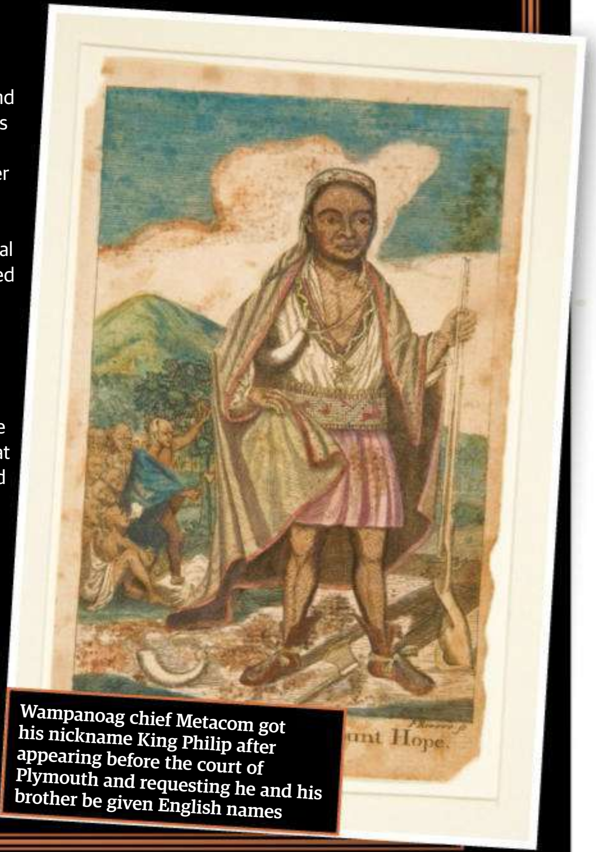
In September 1697, the Treaties of Ryswick were signed in the Western Netherlands city of Rijswijk and the conflict between France and the Grand Alliance finally ended. The colonial borders reverted back to the status quo antebellum, as if nothing had happened. But even after the fighting had stopped, the devastating effect King William's War had had on the people of New England, particularly the Puritans, was apparent for years afterwards, and there is debate on how much effect it had on the outcome of the Salem witch trials.

KING PHILIP'S ARMY

The uprising of Wampanoag chief Metacom, also known as King Philip, was a brutal one. After years of peace between the colonists and the Wampanoags, who were under Metacom's father's rule, the colonists decided that the peace agreement should include the surrender of Native guns, but tensions rose when three Wampanoags were hanged for murder in Plymouth Colony in 1675. Shortly after, colonial militia and Indian raiding parties were deployed around the colonies all over New England.

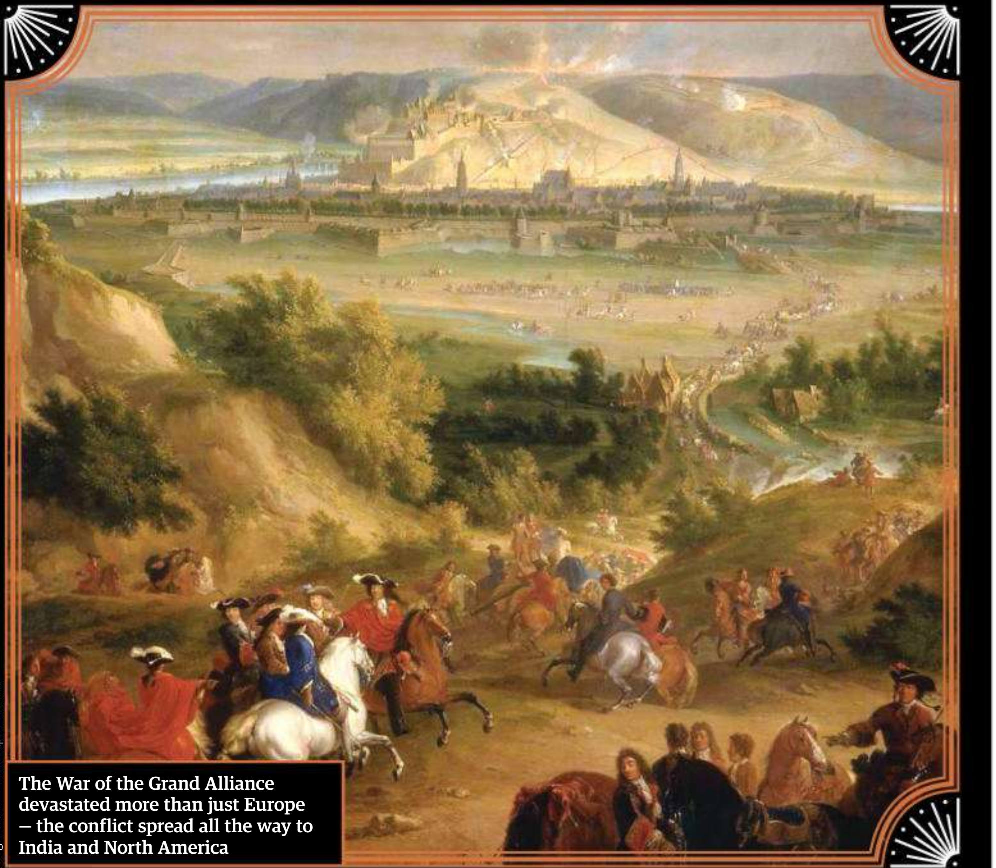
The previously neutral Narragansetts were dragged into the conflict when several individual Narragansett people began to participate in the raids and colonial leaders found them in breach of the peace treaty. The colonists then assembled the largest army that New England had ever mustered and attacked and burned Native villages throughout Rhode Island territory, and pulled off a colossal attack on the Narragansetts' main fort in the Great Swamp Fight of 1675, in which 150 Narragansett men, women and children were brutally murdered.

The Indian coalition, now lead by Narragansett sachem Canonchet, didn't stand and take it: they retaliated, pushing back the frontier in the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth and Rhode Island colonies, burning towns as they went.



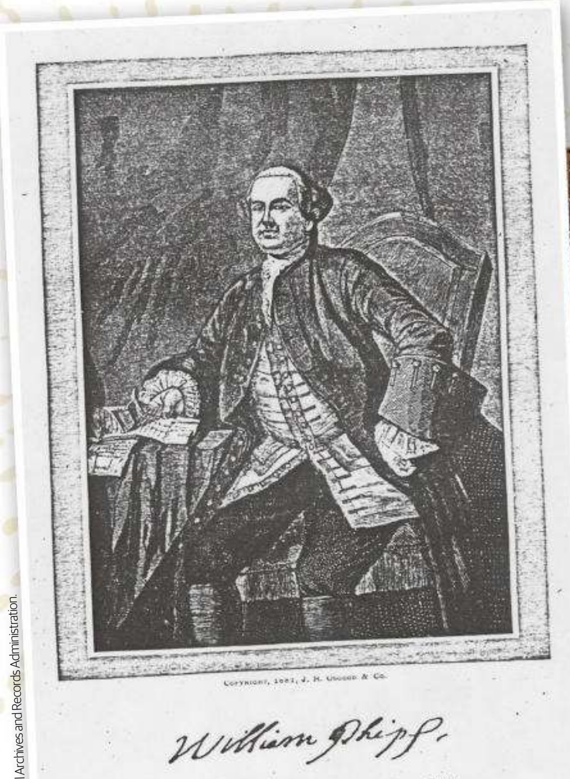
Wampanoag chief Metacom got his nickname King Philip after appearing before the court of Plymouth and requesting he and his brother be given English names

Image Source ✱ Paul Revere.



The War of the Grand Alliance devastated more than just Europe – the conflict spread all the way to India and North America

Image Source ✱ Jean-Baptiste Martin.


Copyright, 1881, J. H. Osgood & Co.
William Phips.
Governor of Massachusetts, 1692 to 1694.

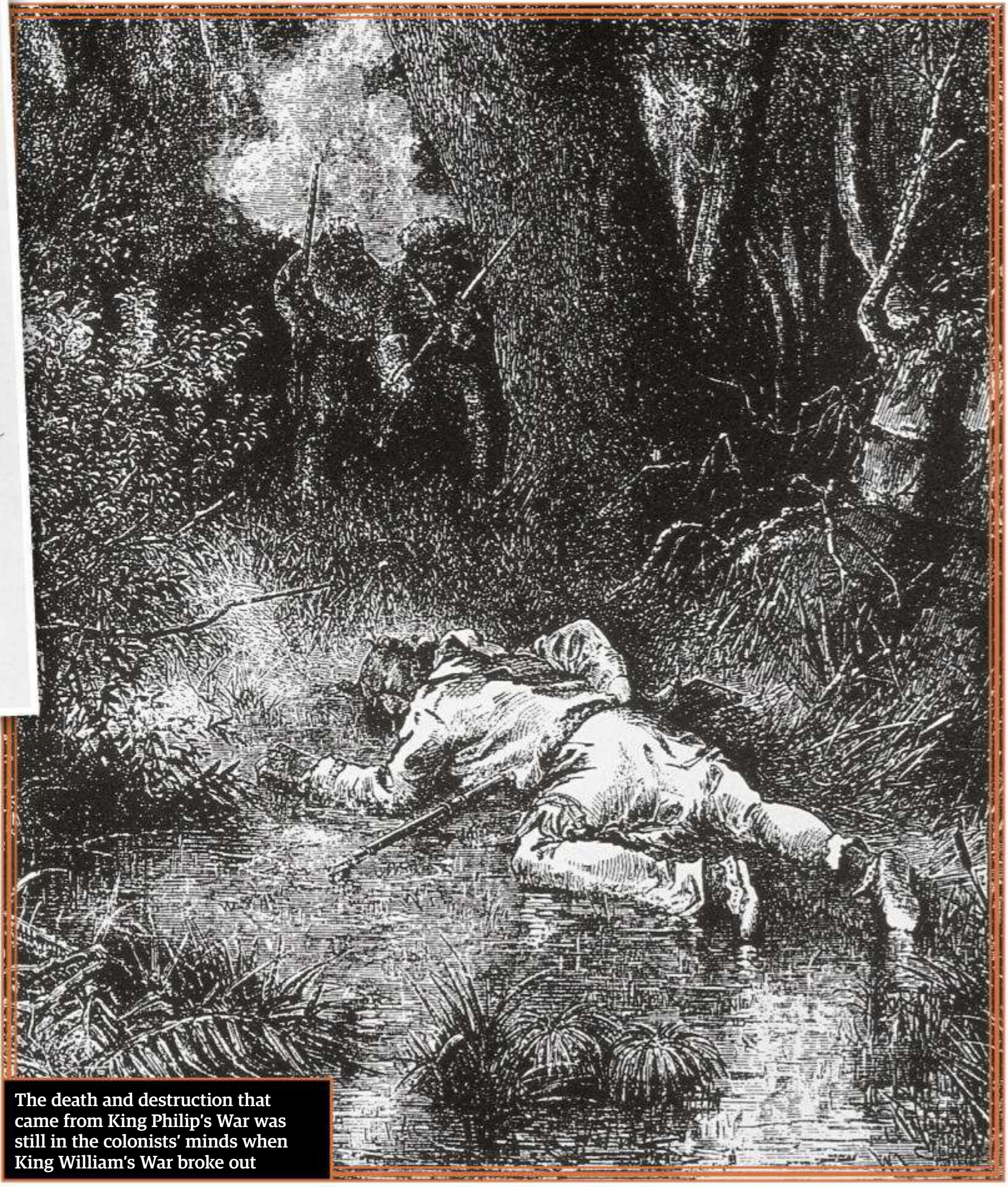
Sir William Phips of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and his men captured Port Royal in May 1690, and almost succeeded in an assault on Quebec

Image Source ✱ National Archives and Records Administration.

Though the Abenaki's primary target throughout King William's War had been Maine, news of their brutal raids spread throughout New England as refugees made their way to the safety of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut to start new lives. Horrifying firsthand accounts and stories of the Native attacks from the ongoing conflict brought back traumatic memories of King Philip's War, which saw the uprising of Wampanoag chief Metacom (who adopted the name King Philip from the English). King Philip's War lasted for three years, and the conflict ended up being the greatest calamity to occur in New England in the 17th century. It is considered by many to be the deadliest war in the history of American colonisation. When tensions rose during King William's War, people became mortally terrified of the Indians all over again.

It wasn't just the Abenaki that were feared as a result of King William's War. All Natives were suddenly seen as bloodthirsty beings that raided villages, burnt down whole towns and scalped the bodies of dead colonists for the sheer sake of it. It wasn't long before New England's Puritan community insisted they were working alongside the Devil. They were 'savages' on a mission from Satan to kill the English.

Just before the start of the Salem witch trials, the war waged on, but things were looking good for the English. The Abenaki were making things difficult, and there was not much anyone could do. So when the first accusers of the trials, the group of 'afflicted' girls that were thrown into fits, began their accusations, the way forward was clear to Salem's Puritans: if the Devil couldn't be defeated by the soldiers that battled him on the warfront, they would have to take matters into their own hands and defeat the Devil in the courthouse. The excruciatingly high levels of hysteria within Salem Village did the rest.



The death and destruction that came from King Philip's War was still in the colonists' minds when King William's War broke out

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

With the battles of King William's War being fought just 70 miles away, Salem was overwhelmed with the feeling that the Devil was near, and everyone started to become more and more suspicious of just about everyone else. If the Devil managed to convince someone to join him then that person became a witch. By the end of the Salem witch trials, the ratio of men to women that had been executed for witchcraft was somewhat uneven, with six men killed against 14 women. Women were considered weaker, and would therefore be less likely to be able to resist the Devil if he wanted them to join him.

The first person to be accused in the Salem witch trials was an enslaved Caribbean woman named Tituba. She was owned by Samuel Parris, the father of Elizabeth Parris, one of the 'afflicted' girls that started the accusations. Tituba allegedly told the girls tales of voodoo and even assisted them in practicing some divination techniques. Accused at the height of the hysteria surrounding Indians, it's no surprise that the Salem community didn't hesitate before latching onto the idea of her being a witch (although Tituba was technically from South America or Barbados, the Puritans put her in the same box as the Native Americans that fought in the Indian Wars).

As well as being the first accused, Tituba was also the first to confess – though while being beaten by the elder Parris – revealing that she learnt about occult techniques from her mistress in Barbados. She dragged Sarah Good and Sarah

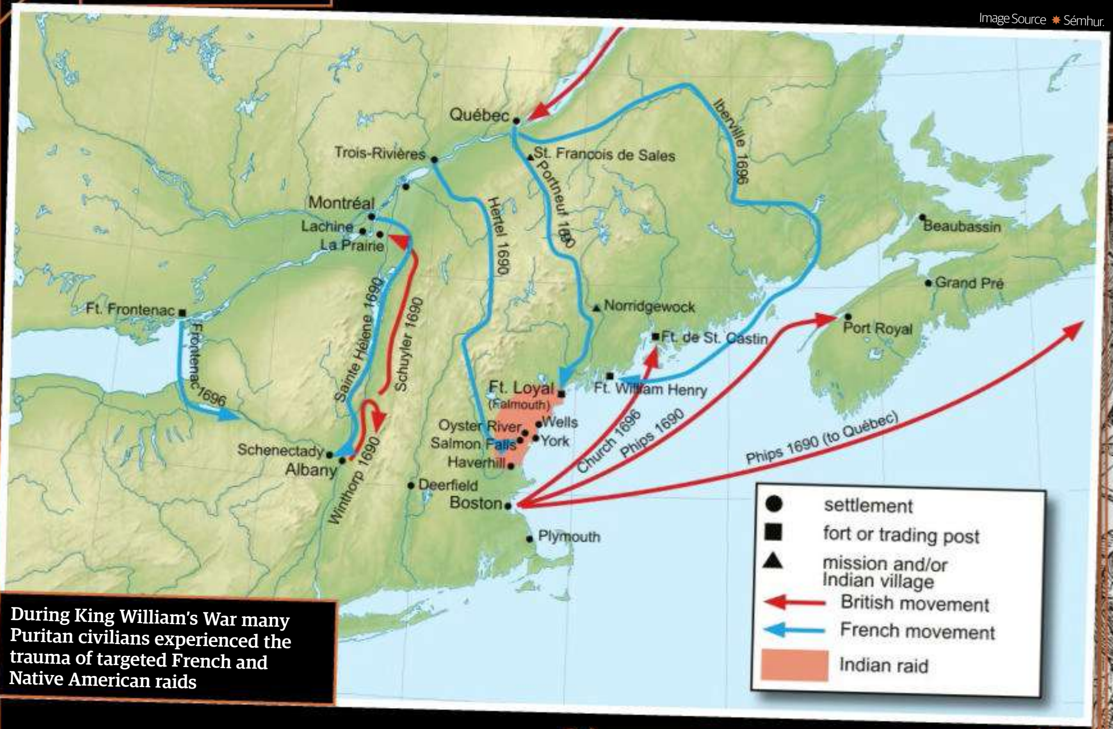

Québec
Trois-Rivières
St. François de Sales
Iberville 1696
Montréal
Lachine
La Prairie
Hertel 1690
Portneuf 1690
Beaubassin
Grand Pré
Ft. Frontenac
Frontenac 1696
Sainte Hélène 1690
Schuyler 1690
Norridgewock
Ft. de St. Castin
Port Royal
Ft. Loyal (Falmouth)
Ft. William Henry
Oyster River
Wells
York
Salmon Falls
Haverhill
Church 1696
Phips 1690
Phips 1690 (to Québec)
Schenectady
Albany
Winthorp 1690
Deerfield
Boston
Plymouth
● settlement
■ fort or trading post
▲ mission and/or Indian village
British movement
French movement
Indian raid

Image Source ✱ Sémhur.

During King William's War many Puritan civilians experienced the trauma of targeted French and Native American raids

Osborne down with her, claiming that they too participated in witchcraft. Both women maintained their innocence, and Good was found guilty and hanged while Osborne died in prison before she could be tried. Following her trial, Tituba was left in jail when Samuel Parris refused to pay her jail fees, and then sold to an unknown slaveowner for the price of the fee. There are no records documenting what happened to her after that point.

For some of the accused, however, the link to Native culture was slightly more tenuous. One of the six men to be executed during the trials was George Burroughs, a well-to-do and previously well-respected minister from Massachusetts. It may seem odd that a man as credible as Burroughs, and a minster no less, would be accused and indicted if it weren't for his link to both King Philip's War and King William's War. Before his first arrival in Salem, where he worked as the minister of the village's church, Burroughs' home in Falmouth, Maine, had fallen victim to a brutal Native American attack and he had been forced to flee. After leaving Salem in 1683, he returned to Falmouth, only for the town to be completely destroyed in an attack by the Wabanaki Confederacy. The Burroughses became just one of many refugee families that sought safety elsewhere, taking them to Wells, Maine.

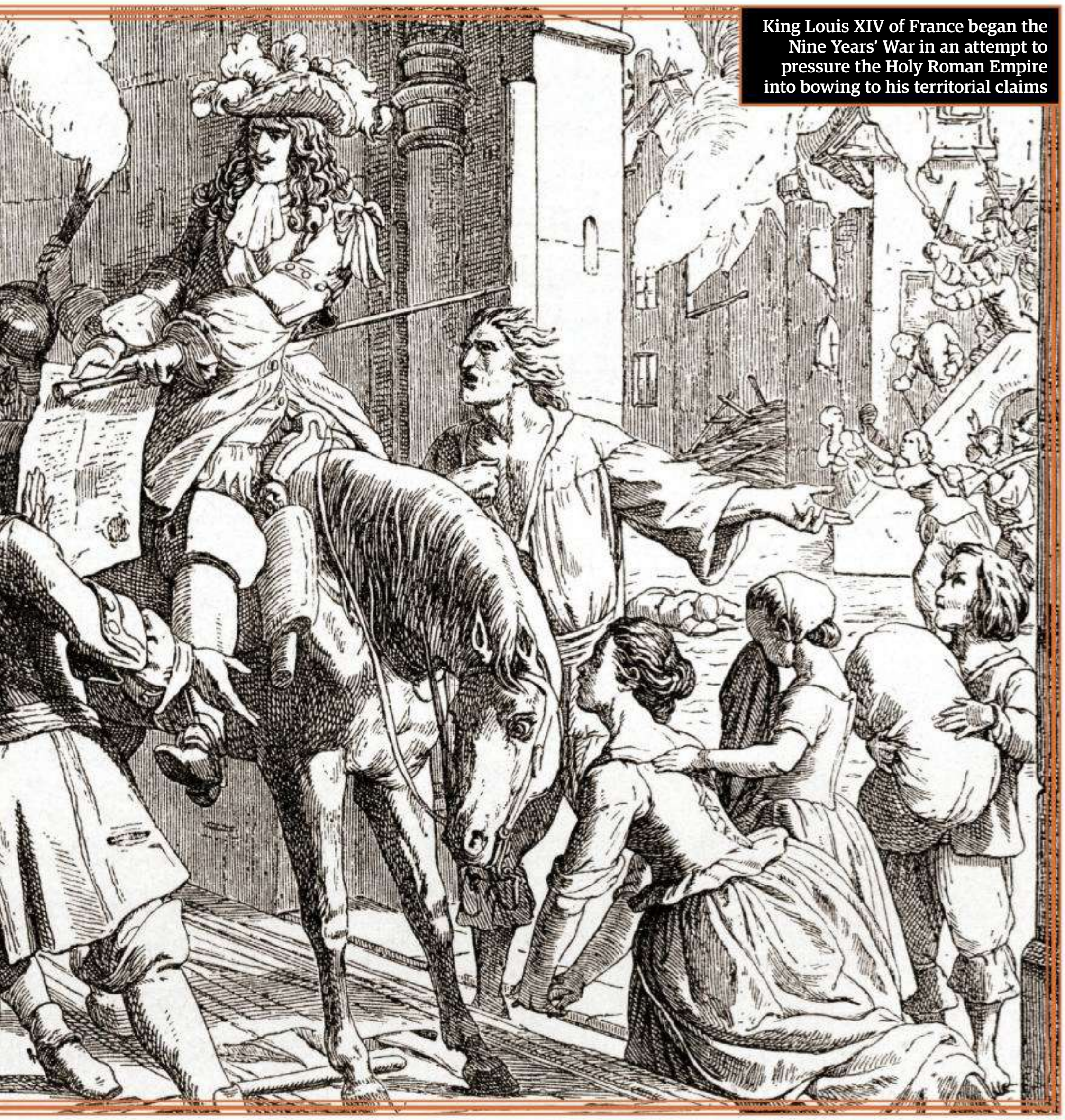
When the Salem witch trials began in 1692, it was Burroughs' association with the wars, and therefore the Native Americans, that made people suspect him of practising witchcraft. The fact that he had simply survived was proof enough for some people. Before his arrest, word spread that Burroughs had managed to survive several brutal attacks by the Native Americans during King William's War when nearly all the other defenders at the fort he was stationed at were murdered. In the minds of some he had obviously succumbed to the ways of the Indians and used dark magic to bewitch the other soldiers and thereby cause a devastating loss for his fellow colonists.

> "In the minds of some Burroughs had obviously succumbed to the ways of the Indians and used dark magic to bewitch the other soldiers"

Burroughs was also extraordinarilyy strong as a result of his time in the war, where he became accustomed to manual labour. His strength may have helped him greatly in the past, but it did him no favours following the accusations: the people of Salem claimed to have seen him lift a musket by inserting one finger into the barrel, a feat that they presumed to be impossible without assistance from a diabolical power. When it came to his trial, Burroughs was painted as the ringleader of the witches of Salem, with other accused witches claiming he introduced them to witchcraft through holding satanic meetings in the village. Burroughs was eventually found guilty of witchcraft and publicly hanged.

However, it wasn't just the accused that were caught up in King William's War: many of the accusers were connected to it too. After the bloody and vicious battles fought throughout the war, crowds of refugees attempted to leave the danger behind and made their way to the safer colonies, carrying sickness and bearing scars, open wounds and poor mental health. The sight of them in such a state caused even more panic among New Englanders, who began to see signs of the Devil's influence everywhere.

Following the second Indian attack, George Burroughs' household found itself a servant, a young girl by the name of Mercy Lewis. Born in Falmouth, Maine, in 1675, Lewis became a refugee at a young age. When she was just a year old, she and her parents narrowly escaped an attack on their village by the nearby Wabanaki Indians (the same attack experienced by Burroughs). Her grandparents and cousins were killed, and the small family was forced to seek out protection elsewhere, with most of the surviving members of the community settling on an island in Maine's Casco Bay. Once they had recovered from the shock of the attack, the Lewises made their way to Salem, where they stayed until Mercy's uncle, Thomas Skilling, succumbed to the wounds he had received



King Louis XIV of France began the Nine Years' War in an attempt to pressure the Holy Roman Empire into bowing to his territorial claims

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

CAPTAIN JOHN ALDEN JR

Before being accused of witchcraft, John Alden Jr was a soldier and a sea captain during King William's War, as well as a Boston merchant and the son of famed Mayflower Pilgrim John Alden.

Alden first stopped at Salem in May 1692 on his way home from Quebec, where he had organised the release of British soldiers from capture at the Candlemas attack in York, Maine, but was soon accused by the 'afflicted' girls – whom he had never met before – and swiftly arrested. However, Alden's name wasn't unfamiliar in Salem: rumours that he had supplied the French military and the Wabanaki Indians in Maine with ammunition during the war had been floating around the village for some time.

One of the girls, Mercy Lewis, had lost her parents in a Native attack in Maine, which has led historians to believe that her accusation was motivated by revenge. There's also the fact that she flat-out accused him of helping the Native Americans during his examination. Sensing he wouldn't get out of a trial alive, Alden became the only person to successfully escape his jail cell during the Salem witch trials. He fled to New York until the hysteria died down, before his case was eventually dismissed.

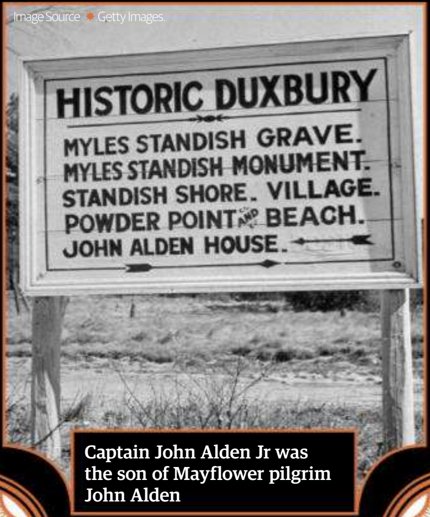


Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Captain John Alden Jr was the son of Mayflower pilgrim John Alden

the Wabanaki and died. In 1683, the family moved back to Casco Bay.

Much like Burroughs, the Lewises barely had time to breathe before the Wabanaki were back and attacked the community for a second time. This time, Mercy Lewis lost both of her parents. It was when she had no one left to care for her that she moved into Burroughs' home to briefly work as the family's servant before leaving Maine for good. The 19-year-old's sights were set once again on Salem, where her married sister was living, and Mercy Lewis began working as a servant in the household of the wealthy Thomas Putnam, who would later become one of the Salem witch trials' most significant accusers.

It was at the Putnams' residence that Lewis met Thomas' daughter, Ann Putnam Jr, and the pair became friends. In the early months of 1692, the younger Putnam began suffering from strange fits and seizures, and they seemed to be spreading: it wasn't long before Lewis began to experience them too. After a series of examinations and tests, a local doctor diagnosed them of being bewitched. That was when Putnam and a group of other 'afflicted' girls began the accusations.

Lewis didn't start naming witches until the following month, but her accusations carried a lot of weight. She started with Elizabeth Proctor on 26 March, and backed up several other accusations given by her peers. In total, Lewis ended up accusing nine people of witchcraft during the trials, and she was instrumental in the accusations of George Burroughs, Captain John Alden Jr and Abigail Hobbs, people she had known from her days in Falmouth, as she was one of the only people in Salem who knew anything about their backgrounds. Her accusation of Alden was particularly interesting, with many historians believing it was a form of payback: he had sold gunpowder and ammunition to the Native Americans in Maine, and may have indirectly caused the death of her parents.

Centuries later, the events of the Salem witch trials are still hard to explain, with no one truly knowing why they happened or what caused them. A smallpox epidemic that broke out in Massachusetts the year before may have had a hand in them, or perhaps too many people bought into what may have been a deadly prank orchestrated by the 'afflicted' girls. Whatever happened, the trials were spurred on by the hysteria that grew from King William's War, and the fear of Devil-worshipping that came with it.

Panic

Hungry and scared, a small New England village started seeing enemies everywhere...

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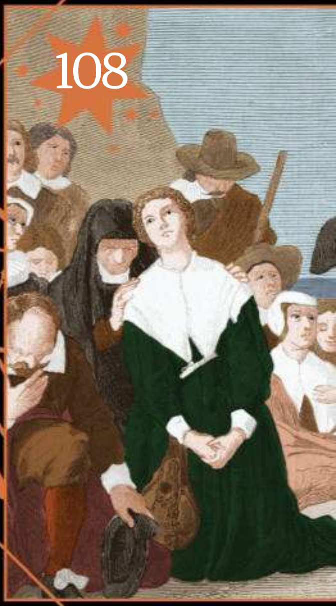

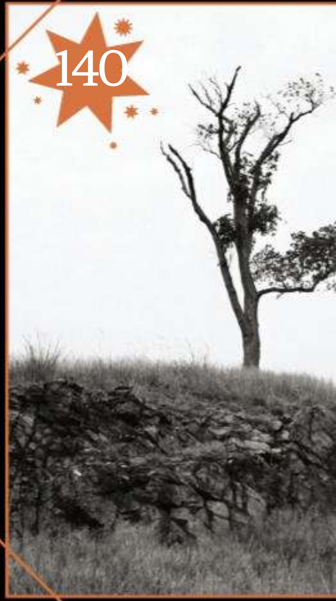

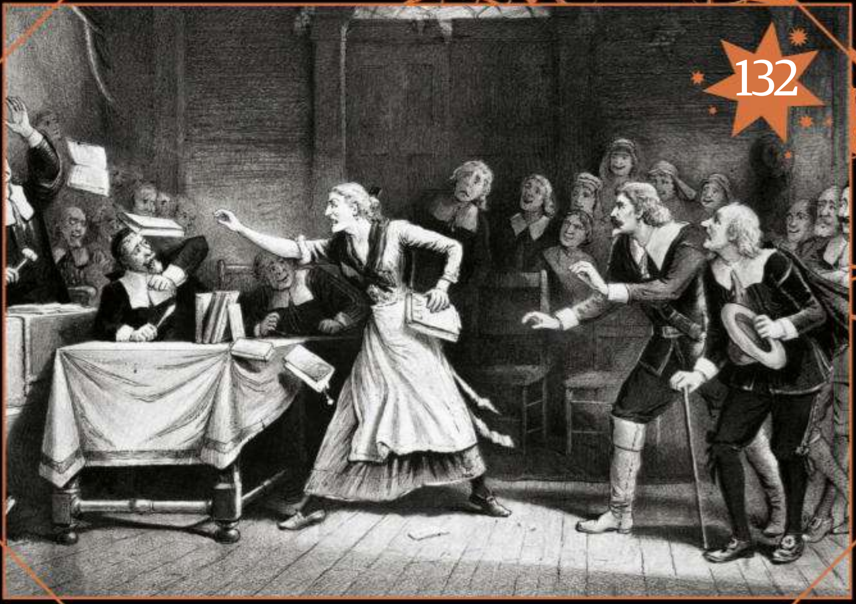
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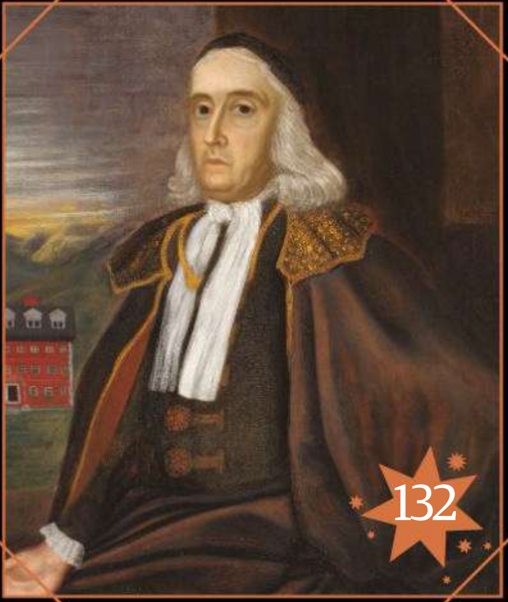
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Dealing with demons

The people of Salem believed that the denizens of Hell stalked the gloomy country roads of their little corner of New England and led the villagers astray

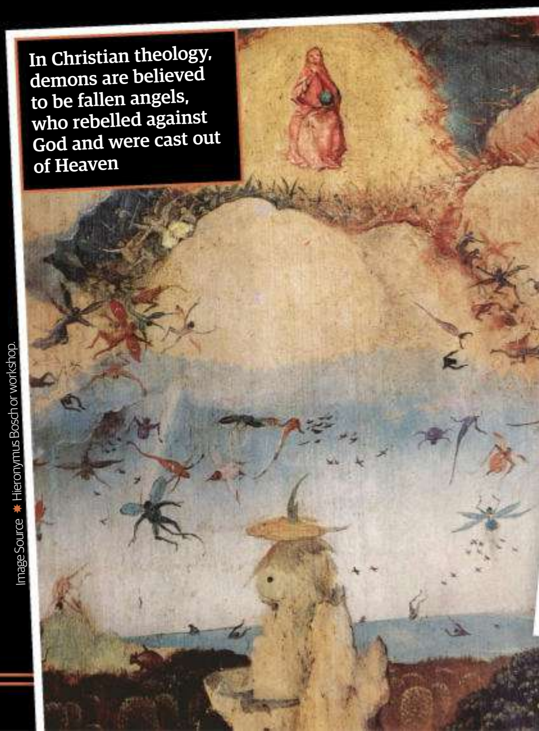
Written by April Madden

Puritans are often associated with dull clothes and dour faces, but behind their deliberately dowdy outward appearance, the Puritan imagination was on fire with lavish imagery. Puritans believed that God demanded that everything should be neat, orderly and plain, so that it didn't distract people from prayer. They were also a millenialist denomination: they believed that the world as they knew it would shortly end, as foretold in the Bible's Book of Revelation. When the world had ended, a new kingdom of Heaven on Earth would be created to reward the righteous, but in the meantime, the End Times had to be dealt with. These chaotic times, before Christ returned to judge humanity, would be a great trial for Christians, because the demonic legions of Satan would be sent to tempt and torment them away from God's path. Dealing with the privations of cold, hungry, war-torn late 17th century Massachusetts must have seemed a lot like living in a minor circle of Hell.

Early Christianity had adopted the Jewish trait of casting the deities of other religions as demons (the Canaanite Ba'al is a notable example), but in the medieval era this was refined into a complex study of demonology based on the story of the War in Heaven in the Book of Revelation. By the time of the Puritans, demons were thought to be fallen angels - a third of the Heavenly Host who had rebelled against God and been cast out of Paradise. They were thought to be capable of leading people astray - women were particularly susceptible to their temptations - and of possessing people, allowing them to perform superhuman or magical feats of strength or sorcery.

Originally the events in Salem were spoken about within the context of demonic possession, but this was rapidly dialled back in favour of the more approachable witchcraft diagnosis. It's questionable whether there was actually any real difference between the 'symptoms' of the two - in the Puritan imagination, witches were in league with the Devil, or at least with one or more of his demonic servants - aside from one theological nicety: those who were possessed were sinful enough to have let the Devil in; those who had been bewitched by someone else were innocent of committing evil because they weren't in control of themselves. It's this subtle distinction that allowed the Salem court to make its seemingly inexplicable decisions about who deserved to be punished and who was a victim.

Main Image Source ✷ Martin Schongauer.



In Christian theology, demons are believed to be fallen angels, who rebelled against God and were cast out of Heaven

Image Source ✷ Hieronymus Bosch or workshop.

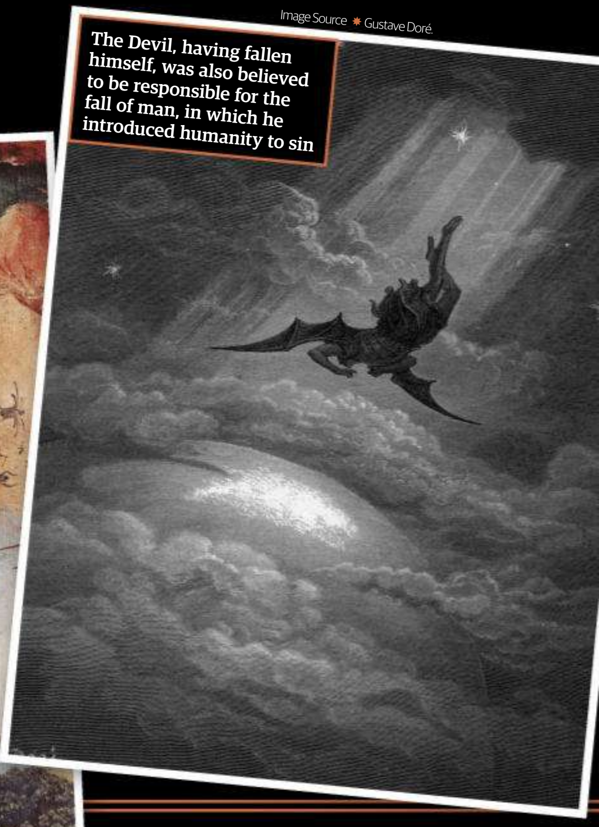
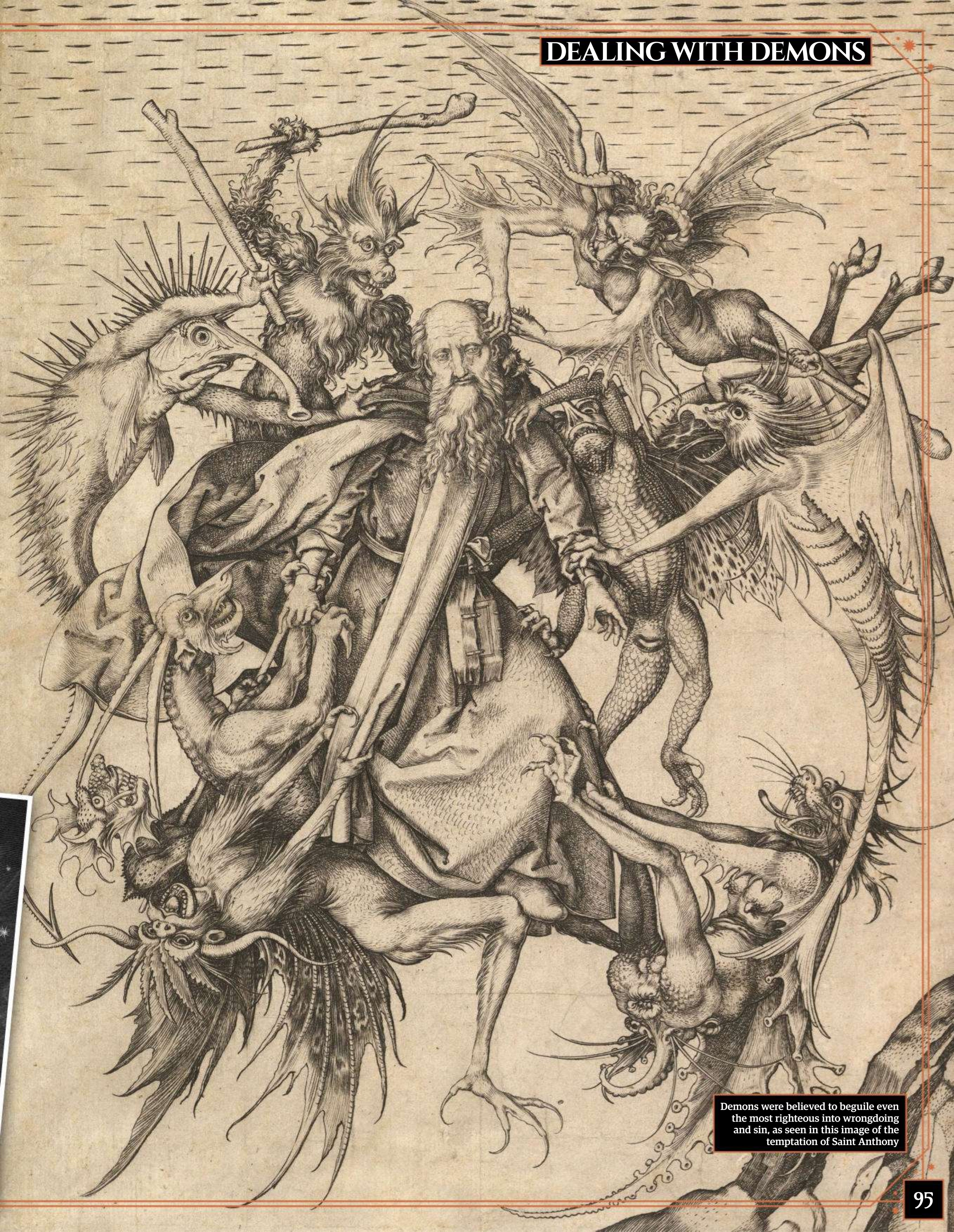


Image Source ✷ Gustave Doré.

The Devil, having fallen himself, was also believed to be responsible for the fall of man, in which he introduced humanity to sin



Demons were believed to beguile even the most righteous into wrongdoing and sin, as seen in this image of the temptation of Saint Anthony

Witch hunting

The witch hunters of early modern Europe and America saw thousands tortured and sentenced to death, but what was a witch hunt and why did this notorious practice happen?

Written by James Hoare

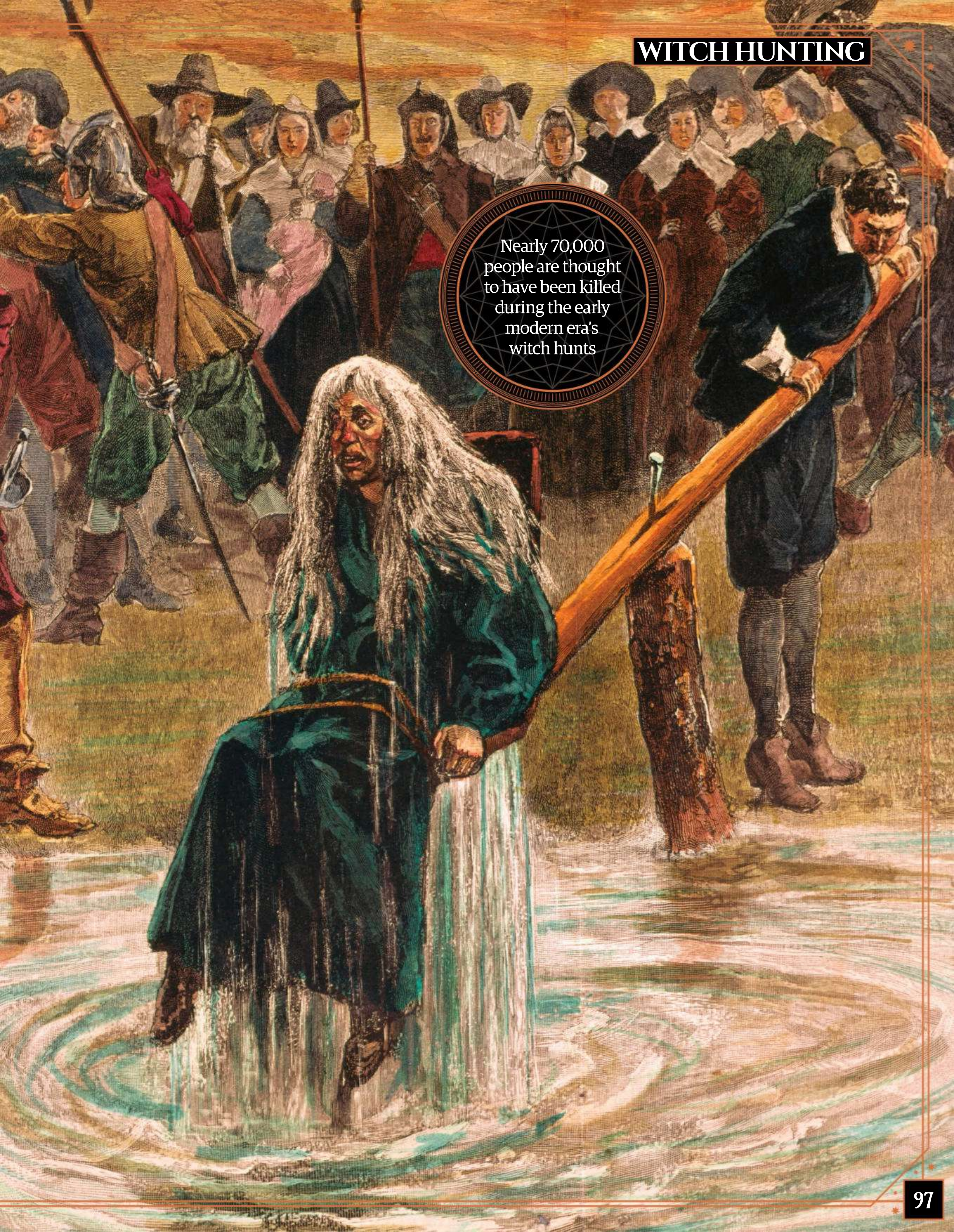
Imagine for a few minutes you're a peasant in 17th-century Europe; a widow who lives in the small abode your husband left in his will. You tend a small plot of land on which you grow a number of root vegetables as well as a few herbs that have traditional medicinal properties. You're a God-fearing woman who attends church as regularly as your old bones allow and you believe in the Devil even if you don't put much stock in the stories of witches who attend to Satan in the woods at night, smearing their backs with 'Devil's ointment' and putting hexes on valuable livestock.

Recently you've seen people from your community being led away by the bishop's men to the courthouse, accused of witchcraft, if the village gossip is to be believed. You don't think you have anything to fear. That is, until armed men garbed in the bishop's colours turn up at your house one morning to take you away for questioning. You comply without so much as a word of verbal resistance; it's all a mistake, of course. This will soon be cleared up, you think, as you're taken through the village's main thoroughfare, past the houses of friends and neighbours who peer suspiciously at you from their houses. You feel embarrassed at first but then remember assuming that the miller's wife, who had been taken away in this manner too, was found guilty of witchcraft. That's when you start to feel afraid and begin fearing for your life.

The courthouse room is presided over by three judges with a clerk who takes the proceedings. Your name is added to the record before the accusations against you are laid out by the court: your neighbour, whom you've known for many years, has reported you to the church authorities for turning her cow's milk sour. She and her farmer husband have accused you of bringing the unseasonable wet weather that caused their harvest to fail and stirring carnal desires in their two maiden daughters, with love potions made from your herbs. You have no need for a lawyer or representation of any kind in this court, you're told, as witchcraft is deemed to be an exceptional crime in which God will defend the innocent.

Of course, you deny being a witch and all wrongdoing. It's absurd, you say, you've never seen eye to eye with your neighbours, who might just be mean enough to accuse you of witchcraft to get rid of you. Your denial is noted but the court considers witchcraft an extremely serious crime, so offers you clemency in return for a full confession. You stand firm and deny the charges, so are taken below to the cells for further questioning. Here, an appointed magistrate has you stripped and searched for magical charms concealed on your body. Your thumb is placed in a vice-like device

Image Source ✸ Corbis.



Nearly 70,000 people are thought to have been killed during the early modern era's witch hunts

Witch hunting worldwide

Scotland

1715

Kate Nevin had the unfortunate distinction of being the last witch to be executed in Scotland. She was hunted for three weeks before she was caught and burned to death.

New England

1662

Salem gets its due share of notoriety, although witch hunting had been going on for decades. The Hartford, or Connecticut witch trials, went on for several years and proved an interesting case of the witch-court's rationale.

England

1612

The Pendle Hill witch trials, one of the most infamous witch hunts in English history, saw ten people executed for murders as a part of their supposed satanic rituals.

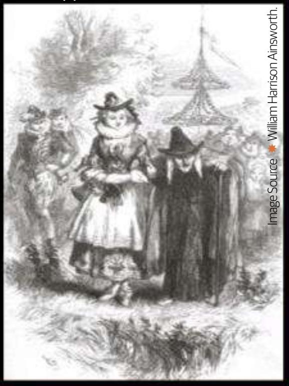


Image Source ✷ William Harrison Ainsworth.

Denmark

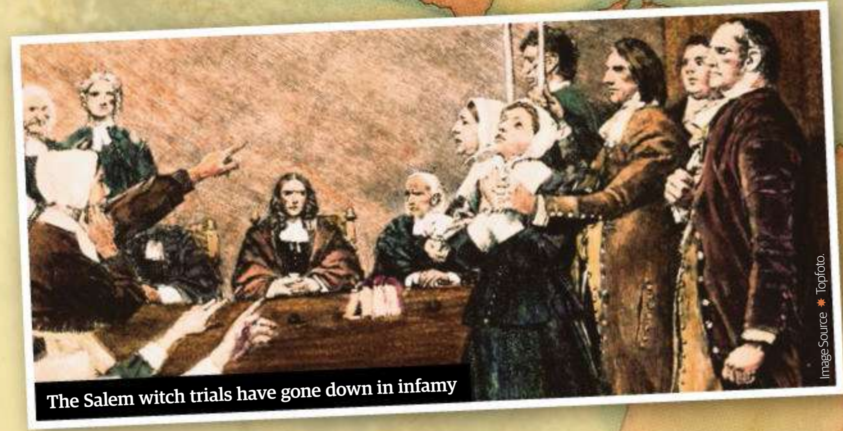
1590

The Protestant king James VI of Scotland (later to be king James I of England) was beset by bad weather when he made the crossing to meet his betrothed, Anne of Denmark. It was blamed on a coven, who were promptly tried and executed.

Zambia

1935

'Witchfinders' called the Bamucapi roamed the villages of the Bemba people, stirring up fear and putting those who fell under suspicion on trial.



The Salem witch trials have gone down in infamy

Image Source ✷ Topfoto.

and pressure applied as, once again, you're asked if you will confess to being a witch. You survive this first day of questioning without buckling under excruciating pain, only to fall foul of the torturer's rack. As the lever turns and your limbs splay, then pop, your eyes roll in agony – a sure sign that you seek Satan's aid. A confession is ultimately extricated and you're sent on a cart along with five other witches to a pyre the very next day, where you burn to death.

Witch hunting didn't start in the Reformation period but it's here that history remembers it best: between the tectonic struggle of the mighty Catholic and Protestant churches, striving to purge their flock of heresy and prove unassailable piety over the rival faith, anyone from low-born to noble could be next in line to be crushed. Only those from the highest echelons of society were safe. So how did this seemingly insane state of affairs first begin?

Much of what couldn't be explained by science in early recorded history was put down to 'magic', a means for ancient societies to understand, if not influence or control the world around them. Ancient Egyptians practised magic alongside more traditional medicine to promote health, protect themselves from evil spirits and communicate with their gods. The ancient Greeks used magic wands and symbols in all aspects of medicine and religion, while the Mesopotamians (what is now a large part of the Middle-East) recorded magical spells on clay tablets. Magic was generally indistinct from religion in many civilisations at this time, with the

> "Pagan Roman law looked to witchcraft as a source of many of the civilisation's ills"

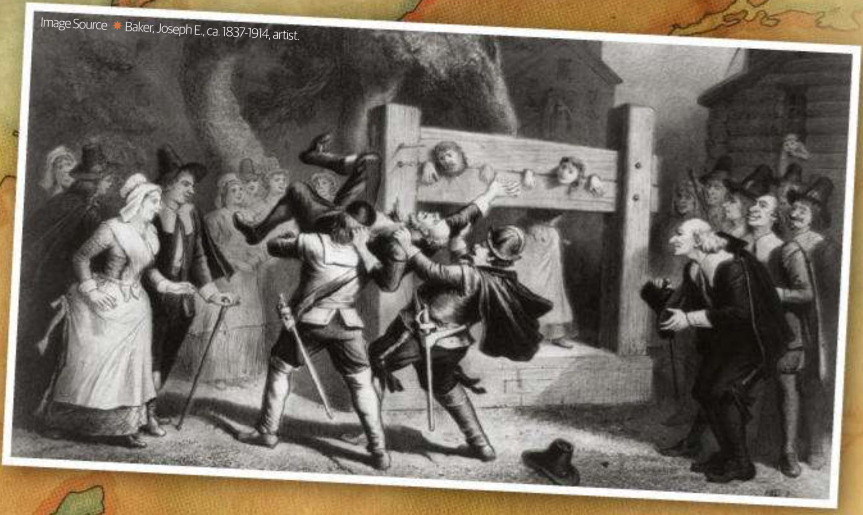


Image Source ✱ Baker, Joseph E., ca. 1837-1914, artist.

India

2011

Superstition and belief in witchcraft is still held in many parts of the developing world. In India, three people in their sixties were attacked and killed by a lynch mob for allegedly practising black magic.

Saudi Arabia

Present day

Sorcery is treated with as draconian a punishment as blasphemy by the Saudi authorities. Those convicted of practising witchcraft (usually women) are invariably beheaded.

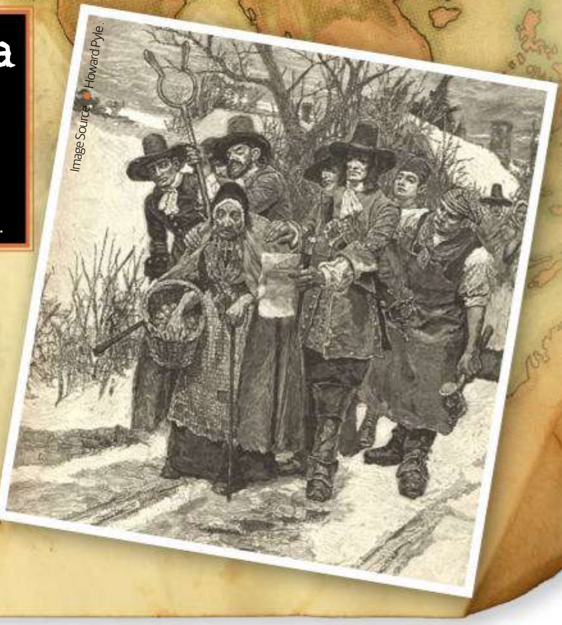
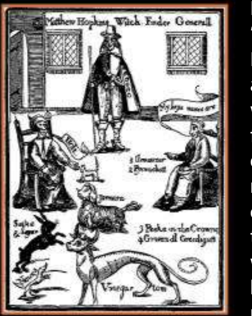


Image Source ✱ Howard Pyle

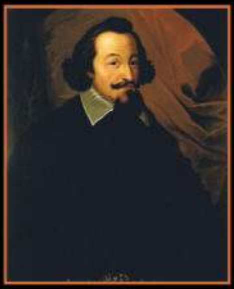
WHO WERE THE WITCH HUNTERS?

The Witch-Finder General England



Matthew Hopkins, the self-titled 'Witch-Finder General', was an English witch hunter who was active from 1644-1647, during which time he was responsible for the execution of 300 convicted witches. He introduced many witch tests that could be considered farcical if it weren't for their dire consequences. His work was sanctioned by Parliament, but he quickly gained a bad reputation for his methods. After his death, he became the bogeyman of his own vile story. His real legacy, however, was his book *The Discovery of Witches*, which gained traction in the colonies of late 17th-century America, especially in a certain community called Salem...

Prince-Bishop of Wurzburg Germany



With blue-bloods and the Pope behind him, Philipp Adolf von Ehrenberg was a powerful man in what is now southern Germany. A staunch anti-Protestant, his zeal for the eradication of witchcraft was matched only by his pursuit of the Catholic reclamation of Bavaria. With that in hand by the end of the 1620s, his focus turned to witches within his jurisdiction. No one was safe: his mass trials saw everyone from peasants to nobles dragged before the court and tried, if not convicted. In the eight years of his reign, over 900 people were burned at the stake, including devout priests, his own nephew and even children as young as three years old.

exception of Rome, where from 438 BCE onward practising magic, much like being a Christian, was made a crime punishable by death. Pagan Roman law looked to witchcraft as a source of many of the civilisation's ills, particularly epidemics and bad harvests. Over the course of several centuries thousands were executed.

In the centuries leading from antiquity to the witch hunting boom, those in power considered witchcraft a silly superstition as frequently as a dangerous threat to society. The 8th-century Christian king of Italy, Charlemagne, scoffed at the belief in witchcraft and actually ordered the death penalty for those who pursued the burning of witches. Similarly, the 11th-century Danish court under King Harold considered the belief in witchcraft more dangerous than witchcraft itself and gave severe punishments to witch hunters.

Through the Middle Ages, witchcraft was mostly tolerated or merely scoffed at and infrequently punished, often with a less punitive jail term or fine, depending on what the witch was accused of. This changed in the 12th century when the Roman Catholic Inquisition was formed, initially to tackle secular faiths that had split off from the church and threatened the power in Rome. The early 14th century saw the Inquisition expand its remit and occasionally deal with users of magic where a sect had adopted witchcraft as a part of its doctrine, such as the Cathars of France – a dualist, Gnostic sect that Rome decried as a church of Satan for its belief in a deity of both good and evil respectively.

By the late Middle Ages, it had become increasingly perilous to openly practise anything but the Catholic faith. Shortly following a Papal bill issued by Pope Innocent VIII in 1484 that explicitly condemned Devil-worshippers who had slain infants, two inquisitors were authorised to investigate witchcraft in Germany. They were Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, who were quick to yoke a new invention, the printing press, and publish what would become an infamous and influential tome on dealing with witchcraft and witches: the *Malleus Maleficarum* – Hammer of Witches. This treatise sought to reinforce the

Are you a witch?

TEST 1

You have been accused of witchcraft. How do you plead?

NOT GUILTY

GUILTY

NO PLEA

TEST 2

You are tried by ducking. Do you:

SINK

FLOAT

CRY 'NOT GUILTY'

TEST 3

You are sentenced to pressing: Do you:

CRY 'GUILTY'

ENTER NO PLEA

DEATH 1

You are burned at the stake for the crime of being a witch

There were many ways someone found guilty of witchcraft could be executed: hanging and beheading were common and drowning was merciful compared to being burned to death. This was a method employed by the zealous Prince-Bishops of Bavaria, who believed that fire was the only way to purge the evil of witchcraft from the land.

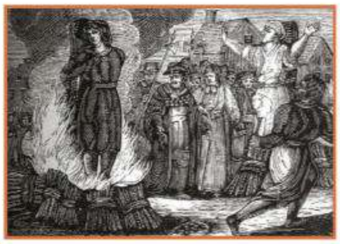


Image Source ✱ Mullica.

DEATH 2

You drown: clearly you were innocent of this crime

One way to determine whether a person was in league with the Devil or not was to bind their right thumb to their left toe and throw them into a pond. If they were rejected by the 'baptismal waters' and floated, they were convicted of witchcraft. If they sank without trace, they were innocent – unfortunately that also meant they would drown.

DEATH 3

You are pressed to death and your estate passes to your heirs

Common law in 17th-century Britain and its colonies meant the defendant could only be tried if they submitted themselves to a trial – if they entered a plea. To coerce a plea out of the accused, they would be stripped naked and a plank placed on their chest, before rocks and other heavy weights were piled onto it. There was a genuine incentive for defendants to 'stand mute': the Crown was unable to forfeit the property if they weren't found guilty.

existence of witchcraft, educate officials in finding and prosecuting it and to lay the burden of its evils on women. It was widely read but within a few years the Catholic Church had distanced itself from the book, primarily because it had become popular with the secular faiths it sought to exterminate. But with the dawn of the Protestant Reformation, the book and its ilk became the linchpin for the witch hunting boom, as the Protestant church endorsed these tomes precisely because they were outlawed by Rome and the Vatican.

As the creation of Protestant churches swept across Europe, witch hunting took place in earnest, encouraged by many royal houses like Denmark and Scotland. Fuelled by religious persecution, the hysteria among the people came in waves marked by a spike in executions. A witch could be accused of causing disease, death, disaster (natural or otherwise), for living in a remote location, being thought strange or foreign, or simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The motives of the accuser could be equally arbitrary, from genuine belief that a witch brought some misfortune upon the community, to even more sinister motives, such as a means of social control by the authorities or to confiscate the property of the accused. In the witch hunting boom in Scotland that lasted up until the 18th century, those practising witchcraft went from being thought superstitious crackpots to dangerous Devil-worshippers: they had sold their souls to Satan and held anti-Christian services called a witches' Sabbath. Witchcraft was legislated against in 1563 and over the course of the next 150 years or so, the 'witch-prickers' went about their business of pricking the body of a person accused of witchcraft: if they didn't bleed, it was viable evidence for the court to try them.

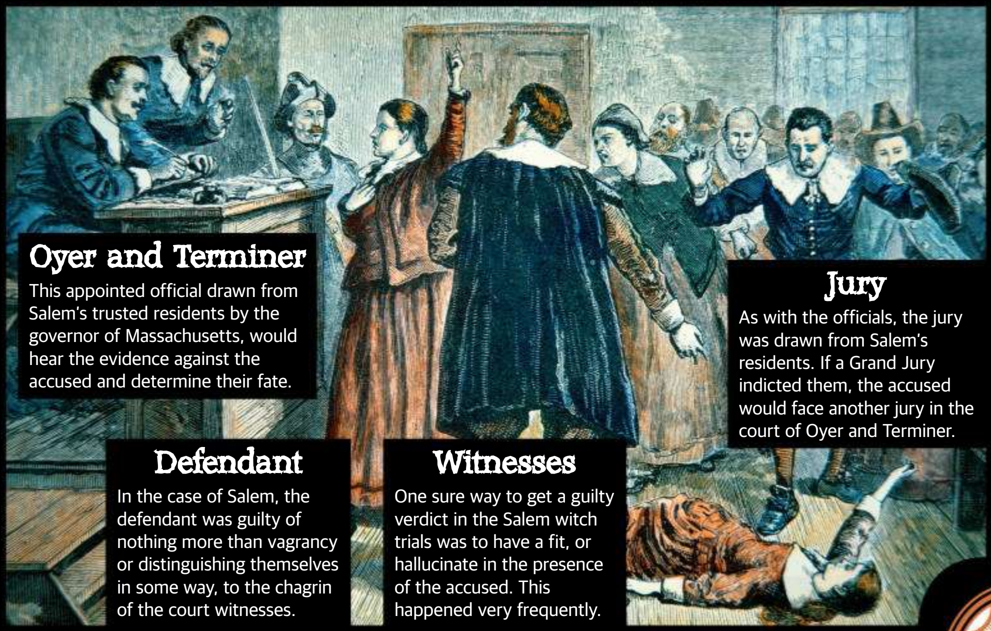
Torture was a common means of extracting information from those who weren't immediately cleared by the courts. Although the height of the witch trial era was marked by general disregard for real evidence and irrational hysteria, torture wasn't

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

Usually old, sometimes ugly, often female; the witch of children's fairytales still lingers as a stereotype today. Court records show that across Europe the majority of those tried as witches were women, even though white witches and cunning folk were just as likely to be men. However, as the Church became more intent on stamping out all forms of heresy, women became the main focus of witch hunts.

From the 15th century onwards women were seen as increasingly vulnerable to the temptations of magic. They were viewed as sex mad and seriously stupid by many, and clerics writing on demonology described lust-filled women who were seduced into evil by the Devil and took part in unholy orgies.

Later reformers took an equally dim view. For Martin Luther, women were so weak that they were easily won over by the promises of magic. In the 16th and 17th centuries, witches were nearly always women and any men caught in the act were usually seen to have been tempted over to darkness by a wicked woman. But when the wave of persecutions ended and witchcraft was no longer pursued through the courts, the wise folk recorded in local communities once more featured men as well as women.



Oyer and Terminer

This appointed official drawn from Salem's trusted residents by the governor of Massachusetts, would hear the evidence against the accused and determine their fate.

Jury

As with the officials, the jury was drawn from Salem's residents. If a Grand Jury indicted them, the accused would face another jury in the court of Oyer and Terminer.

Defendant

In the case of Salem, the defendant was guilty of nothing more than vagrancy or distinguishing themselves in some way, to the chagrin of the court witnesses.

Witnesses

One sure way to get a guilty verdict in the Salem witch trials was to have a fit, or hallucinate in the presence of the accused. This happened very frequently.

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

> "Torture was a common means of extracting information from those who weren't immediately cleared"

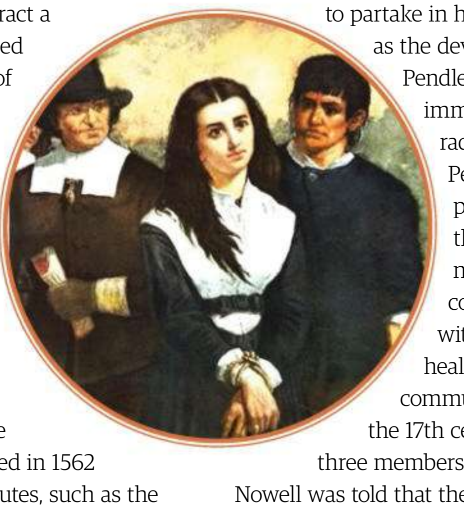


Image Source ✱ Thomas Satterwhite Noble.

a completely arbitrary practice and there was a certain method to be followed: generally speaking, the torture came in several degrees of increasing intensity and brutality, observed and recorded by a clerk. The idea was to extract a confession and have the accused repeat the confession outside of the torture: the accused was presumed guilty and often, even those convinced of their innocence would admit to anything after the prolonged agony of cruel and unusual punishments – it was a rare occasion for torture leading to an acquittal.

England brought in serious penalties for witches under the Witchcraft Act of 1542, amended in 1562 and 1604 to repeal certain statutes, such as the 'benefit of clergy', which spared anyone who could read a passage from the Bible. One of the most famous witch trials in England were of the Pendle witches in 1612, which saw ten people, mostly women, sent to the gallows. King James I was driven by Protestant theology and was particularly interested in witchcraft and its eradication. Thus, those who refused to attend the Church of England to partake in holy communion, such as the devout Catholics of the Pendle Hill region in Lancashire, immediately popped up on the radar of local Justice of the Peace Roger Nowell. Further probing by Nowell revealed that several of these local non-conformists already considered themselves witches of a kind, providing healing and potions for the community – a common trade in the 17th century. After summoning three members of the Device family, Nowell was told that the Chattox family – who competed for their trade in the potion and charm business – had murdered four men from the area. The Chattoxes were summoned and accusations and counter-accusations flew throughout the community, resulting in ten people being hanged for their supposed crimes.

Similar stories played out in the rest of Europe and its North American colonies. German heiress Merga Bien, heavily pregnant at the time, was convicted of murdering her husband by witchcraft; it was alleged that her unborn child had been fathered by the Devil. She was burned at the stake. Anna Kolding was one of several people who bore the brunt of a Danish minister looking to shift blame for under-supplying the royal ships on a journey across the North Sea. She was accused of summoning storms, found guilty, and burned.

In the 18th century, a much more rational and scientific age finally arrived. Pioneering astronomers and scientists like Galileo and Newton had laid the groundwork for an empirical generation who sought to verify the nature of the world by observation rather than superstition. A dim view was now taken of those who still believed in witchcraft and persecuted 'witches', and this brought with it a far less punitive culture. During the reign of George II, the Witchcraft Act of 1735 made it explicitly illegal for anyone in Britain to claim that they or anyone else had magical powers and were a witch. Other countries quickly followed suit, finally signalling the end of two centuries of madness. Although nearly 70,000 people are thought to have been executed during the brutal witch hunts of the early modern age, only around 12,000 of these executions have been officially recorded.

Town & context

17th-century Salem Village was a tiny hamlet with a contentious reputation, five miles from the edge of the larger town of the same name

Written by April Madden

Today, Salem has a thriving tourist industry based on its reputation as the City of Witches, but the events that drove the Salem witch trials actually happened five miles northwest of the Essex County city, in what is now the town of Danvers. Then known as Salem Village, it was settled in 1636, ten years after its larger namesake, which was subsequently known as Salem Town. Both town and village were named after a Greek translation of the Hebrew word for peace, but Salem Village was anything but peaceful.

Salem Village was a struggling hamlet on the Old Spanish Road, a former Native American trail that had been improved by the colonists to connect the thriving towns of Salem and Boston. Unlike the two wealthy, cosmopolitan New England ports, Salem Village was a spartan, hardscrabble place. It was cold and lonely – the few houses were spread thinly, often with a mile or more between them. Away from the coast, the long Massachusetts winters were harsh, and in the woods lurked the remnants of the Native Naumkeag tribe, who had been pushed out of their ancestral lands. Struggling with a plunging population crisis precipitated by the introduction of Old World diseases and under the thumb of repressive colonial laws, some Natives saw the strung-out homesteads of Salem Village as the perfect target for night attacks. The Puritan population was fearful, and their fears weren't assuaged by the fact that Salem Town expected the village menfolk to make the hard winter journey to the port town to serve on its Watch, while leaving the women and children of their own village exposed to the terrors of the long, dark New England nights. They rebelled.

But Salem Village was always rebelling. Locally, it was referred to, with Puritan understatement, as "quarrelsome". The people of Salem Village quarrelled with everyone. They quarrelled among themselves about boundary disputes, grazing and land rights, even who sat where in church. They quarrelled with the church about whose responsibility it was to see that the local minister was fed and clothed and housed, and whether each incumbent was Puritan enough for their tastes. They quarrelled with the Crown about British governance and law and their right to self-determination. They were such a thorn in the colonial government's side that when Salem Village finally petitioned for its own Crown charter, the answer came back "The King unwilling". Those three words summed up the fractious townsfolk to such an extent that, comically, it is still the motto of modern-day Danvers today. In 1692, however, Salem Village's unique circumstances and quarrelsome nature made it the perfect crucible for the kindling of a deadly witch panic.

ROWLEY VI
I
II
OR
BOXFORD
IV
Brook
Iron Works
Pout
Willis Hill
Wilkins Pond
D I N G
L Y N
"The River"
Seven Mens Bounds
XXIII
XXVI

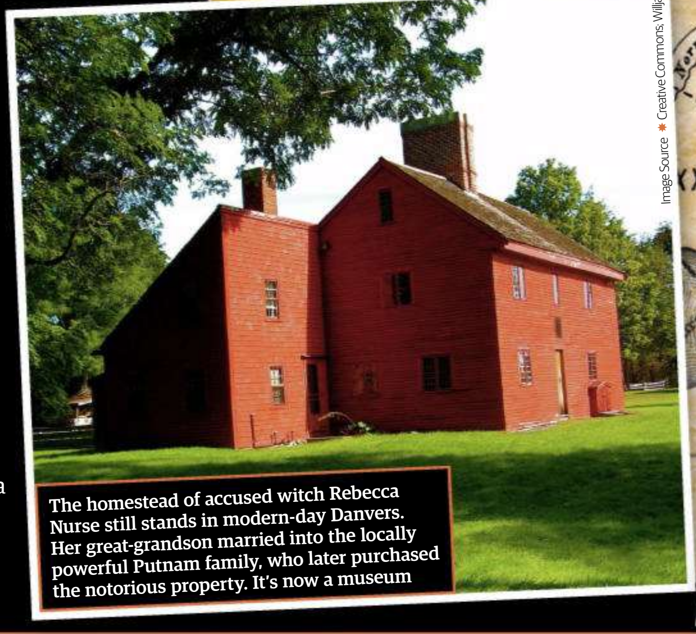
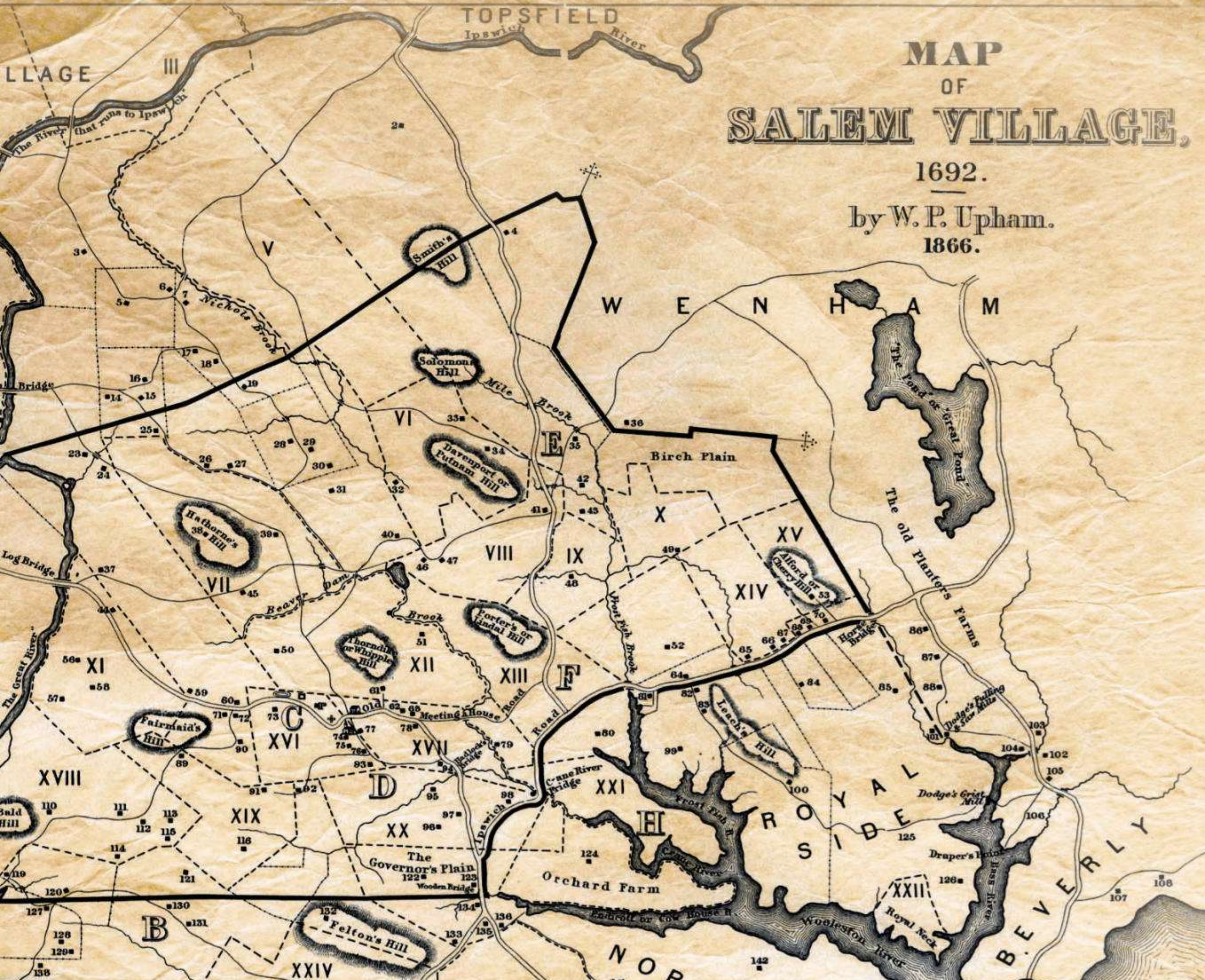

The homestead of accused witch Rebecca Nurse still stands in modern-day Danvers. Her great-grandson married into the locally powerful Putnam family, who later purchased the notorious property. It's now a museum

Image Source * Creative Commons, Willjay.


MAP
OF
SALEM VILLAGE,
1692.
by W. P. Upham.
1866.
TOPSFIELD
Ipswich River
The River that runs to Ipswich
WENHAM
The Pond or Great Pond
The old Planters Farms
Smith's Hill
Solomon's Hill
Mile Brook
Davenport or Putnam Hill
Birch Plain
Hathorne's Hill
Log Bridge
Beaver Dam
Brook
Porter's or Lindal Hill
Thorndike or Whipple Hill
Alford or Cherry Hill
Frost Fish Brook
Horse Bridge
The Great River
Fairmaid's Hill
Meeting House Road
Leach's Hill
Dodge's Fulling & Saw Mills
Bald Hill
Crane River Bridge
Frost Fish R.
Dodge's Grist Mill
ROYAL SIDE
The Governor's Plain
Wooden Bridge
Orchard Farm
Crane River
Draper's Point
Bass River
BEVERLY
Felton's Hill
Endicott or Cow House R.
Wooleston River
Royal Neck
NORTHFIELDS
Procter's Corner
Read's Hill
Ferry
Brook
Stone's Plain
Gardner's or Goldthwaite
Strong Water Br.
Trask's Mills
NORTH RIVER
Town Bridge
Butts Bridge
The Town of Salem
South River

This map of what Salem looked like in 1692 shows what a sparsely populated, spread-out village it was, at the mercy of the harsh landscape's elements and the ire of the displaced Native population

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; W.P. Upham.

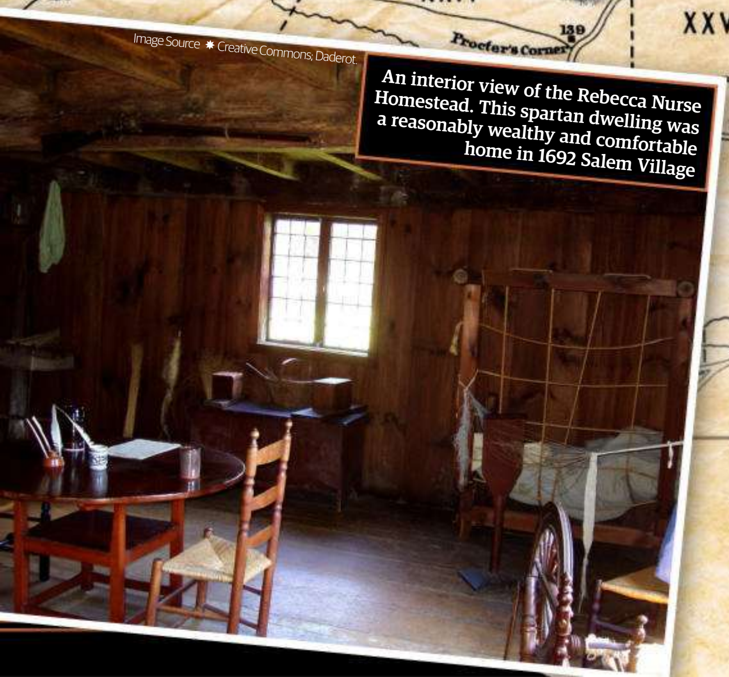


Image Source ✱ Creative Commons; Daderot.

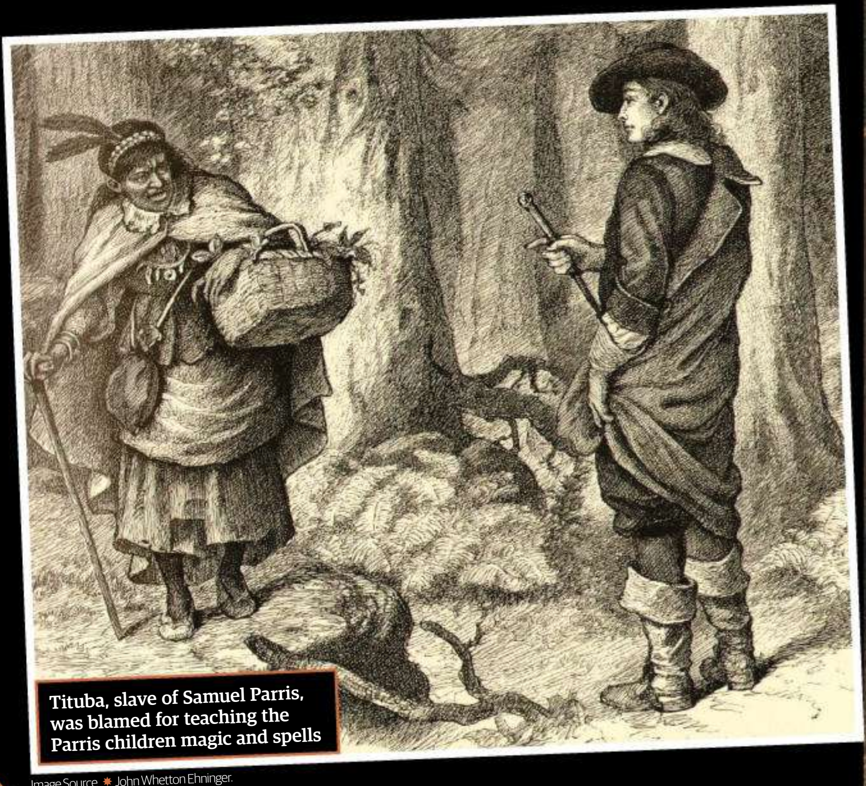
An interior view of the Rebecca Nurse Homestead. This spartan dwelling was a reasonably wealthy and comfortable home in 1692 Salem Village

Salem witch trials: Who's Who

Hundreds of people played a role in the Salem witch trials - accused, accusers, and witnesses all had their reasons and motivations

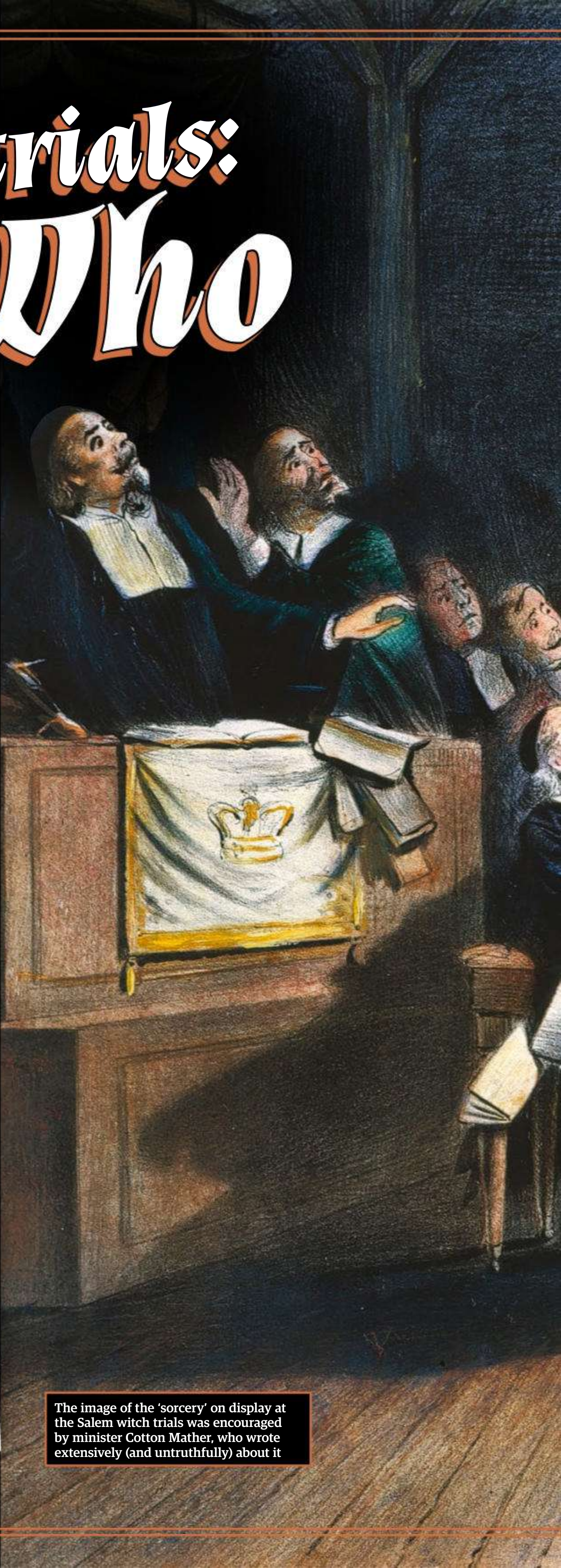
Written by Ben Gazur

Salem Village in 1692 was a place riven by personal antipathies, religious differences, and property disputes. Out of this situation emerged the accusations and convictions for witchcraft that would make Salem forever associated with hysteria. Keeping track of how all the villagers were related by ties of blood and enmity is important in judging the actions of all involved. In small communities even the most innocuous event can have huge repercussions. Here are the key figures in the Salem witch trials and why they may have acted as they did.



Tituba, slave of Samuel Parris, was blamed for teaching the Parris children magic and spells

Image Source ✱ John Whetton Ehninger.



The image of the 'sorcery' on display at the Salem witch trials was encouraged by minister Cotton Mather, who wrote extensively (and untruthfully) about it

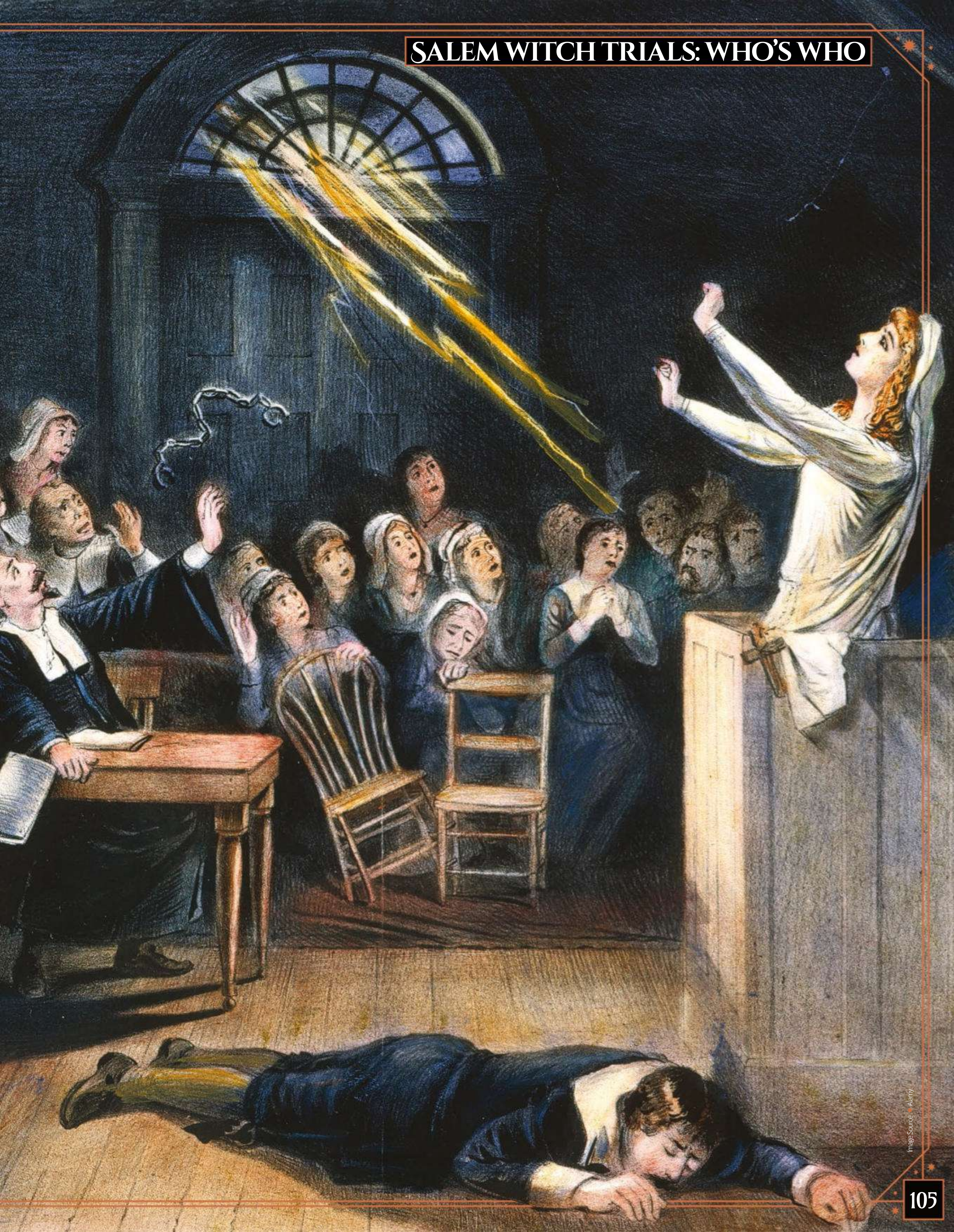


Image Source · Alamy

The afflicted & accusers

Betty Parris, 9, child

Daughter of Salem's minister Samuel Parris. Elizabeth 'Betty' Parris began to suffer strange symptoms in February 1692 in which she barked like a dog, hid from her father, shrieked, and contorted her body.

Abigail Williams, 12, child

Cousin of Betty Parris and residing in the Parris parsonage after her parents were killed in a Native American attack. The orphan may have been suffering from PTSD. Suffered symptoms similar to her cousin.

Ann Putnam, Jr, 13, child

Friend of Betty Parris and daughter of Thomas Putnam. The Putnams were a wealthy family and important in Salem but her father had been left out of several potential inheritances. Ann Putnam soon developed symptoms of bewitchment similar to those her friends suffered and "cried out against" 62 people as witches during the trials. Many of those accused were associated with the Porter family, with whom Thomas Putnam had a rivalry.

Elizabeth Hubbard, 17, servant

Niece and servant of town doctor William Griggs. The orphaned Elizabeth may well have heard about the symptoms suffered by the other bewitched girls from her uncle. Being 17 she was allowed to testify under oath directly to the court. Suffered many fits and was able to identify the witches who were attacking her. Noted for being particularly convincing as a witness.

Mercy Lewis, 19, servant

Servant in Thomas Putnam's house. Mercy had arrived in Salem as a refugee from a Native American attack on her village and served the former Salem minister George Burroughs before moving to a new home with her family. This was also attacked by Native Americans and Mercy was left an orphan. Accused many of the same people as Ann Putnam, though Ann would later also accuse Mercy of appearing to her as an apparition.

Mary Warren, 18, servant

Servant of the Proctors. Suffered fits until John Proctor threatened to beat her if she had any more. Publicly thanked God for her reprieve from enchantment. The other bewitched girls then accused her of witchcraft. Began to convulse under questioning and confessed to being a witch as well as accusing others.

Sarah Bibber, 36, housewife

A quarrelsome woman who enjoyed gossip and was described by her neighbours as a "loose-tongued creature, addicted to fits." Accused Sarah Good but was later accused by others in the village of being a witch.

Thomas Putnam, 40, militiaman and court clerk

From a well-to-do family but excluded from the wills of his father and father-in-law. Charged many witches and recorded the testimonies of the afflicted girls. Accused 43 individuals – many from families that had taken positions and land that Putnam may have felt entitled to.

The accused

Sarah Good, 39, housewife

A penniless woman regarded a "turbulent spirit, spiteful, and so maliciously bent" that few neighbours would help her family with their needs. Muttered dark threats towards many villagers.

Sarah Osborne, 49, housewife

Widow of a Putnam relation, Sarah had remarried and taken hold of land that should have gone to her sons. Due to being bedridden, Osborne had not attended church for several years. Accused by Ann Putnam of witchcraft.

Tituba, possibly mid-20s, slave

A slave, likely an Arawak from South America, who lived in the Parris household. Is supposed to have taught the children of the house occult rituals. Confessed and accused others. Later alleged her testimony was coached by Samuel Parris.

Bridget Bishop, 59, housewife

A local troublemaker, Bishop had previously been whipped for fighting with her husband and publicly shamed. Before the Salem trials, had once been accused of bewitching her husband to death. Accused again in 1692.

Rebecca Nurse, 72, housewife

A well-respected member of the community, Nurse was accused of murdering seven babies. Leased a large area of land coveted by others. Charged by Edward and John Putnam.

Susannah Martin, 70, housewife

First accused of witchcraft in 1669 ,she was convicted, though a higher court later dismissed the charges. By 1692 Martin was a widow and living in poverty having lost several legal cases pursuing an inheritance.

Sarah Wildes, 65, housewife

Wife and mother to respectable men in Topsfield but had earlier in her life been whipped for fornication and wearing sumptuous clothes. Having married a widower soon after the death of his first wife, a grudge developed between her in-laws the Goulds and Sarah. The Goulds were relatives of the Putnams and Ann Putnam testified against her.

George Jacobs, Sr, 83, farmer

Grandfather of a family who were all targeted for arrest. Known to be sceptical of the witch trials, laughing at the antics of his accusers. Had once been accused of drowning horses belonging to Nathaniel Putnam that wandered onto his property. Also had a reputation for violence.

George Burroughs, 39, minister

The former minister of Salem, Burroughs had quarrelled with his parishioners over pay and the building of a parsonage. Had lodged with John Putnam. After the village stopped paying his wages entirely, Burroughs left. John Putnam arrested Burroughs for an unpaid debt.

John Proctor, 60, businessman

Tavern owner and son of a prosperous landowner John Proctor was the employer of Mary Warren, one of the afflicted girls. Incredulous about the witchcraft accusations he threatened Mary when she suffered fits.

Giles Corey, 81, farmer

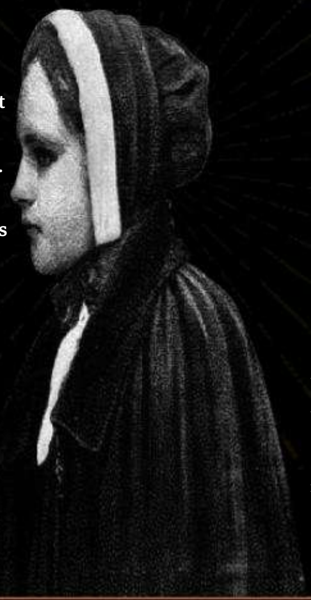
A wealthy farmer, Corey had previously been charged with beating one of his workers to death. Convicted but only fined. Refused to plead either guilty or innocent to witchcraft charges.

Martha Corey, 72, housewife

The wife of Giles Corey, Martha was known in Salem village for her mixed-race son Beroni ,who lived with the family. A pious woman, she refused to believe the accusations of witchcraft and let her views about the trials be widely known.

John Willard, 35, constable

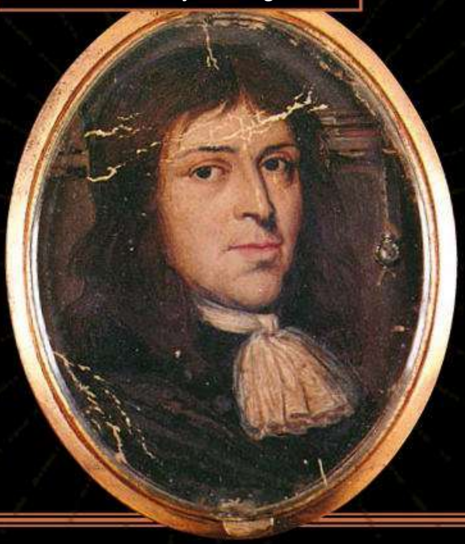
Had once been employed in watching a baby child of Thomas Putnam. When it died Willard was blamed. Acting as constable, Willard arrested those first accused of witchcraft but resigned rather than continue. Swore that the accusers were all liars and would hang.



Salem Town's Bridget Bishop had already drawn the village's ire for her way of life. She was the first to be executed during the Salem witch trials

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Author Unknown.

Villagers, judges & accusers



Reverend Samuel Parris had a tumultuous relationship with his congregation, and it was in his house that the witchcraft hysteria began

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Author Unknown.

Samuel Parris, 40, minister

Minister of Salem at the time of the witch panic, the first accusations of witchcraft occurred in Parris' home. Salem's relations with its ministers had been strained for many years and Samuel Parris struggled to extract his wages from the village. Pressed charges on the basis of the accusations of those in his house. Preached many sermons about the church being under attack by witches.

William Phips, 43, governor

Appointed governor with the approval of Increase Mather after the former governor was driven out for being insufficiently Puritan-minded. Agreed to set up courts to try those accused of witchcraft. Never attended a trial.

William Stoughton, 61, lieutenant governor

Stoughton was appointed to his lieutenant governorship by Increase Mather. The chief judge, and acting prosecutor, of the witch trials. Permitted spectral evidence – visions allegedly had by the accusers.

William Griggs, 72, doctor

Having moved to Salem, Griggs formed friendships with both Reverend Parris and Thomas Putnam. Possessed nine books of medicine and had previously diagnosed a case of witchcraft. Declared the Salem girls to be "under an evil hand."

Increase Mather, 53, minister

Increase Mather was a firm believer in the power of witchcraft. Responsible for the appointments of William Phips and William Stoughton.

Cotton Mather, 30, minister

Cotton Mather, son of Increase, was a well-known preacher and outspoken opponent of witchcraft. Had published accounts of victims of witches that were strikingly similar to those suffered by the afflicted of Salem. Instrumental in Stoughton's appointment as judge. Cotton Mather publicised the events of Salem.

Those who escaped

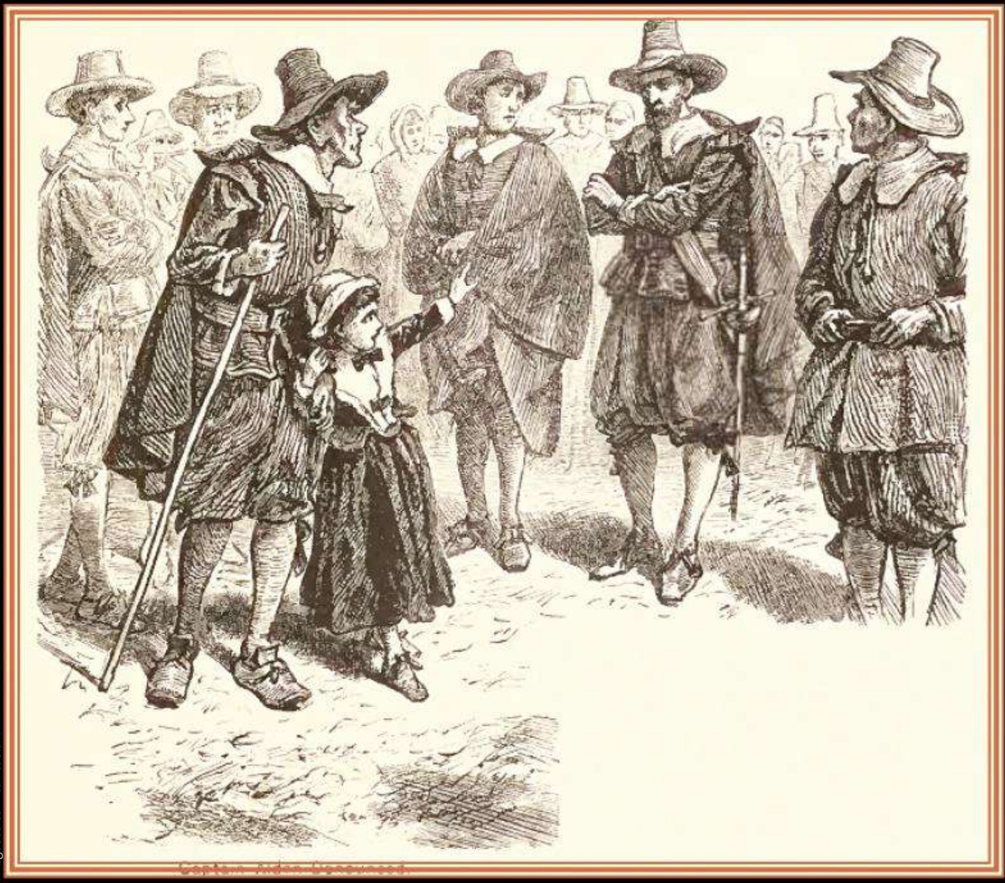

Captain Alden Denounced.

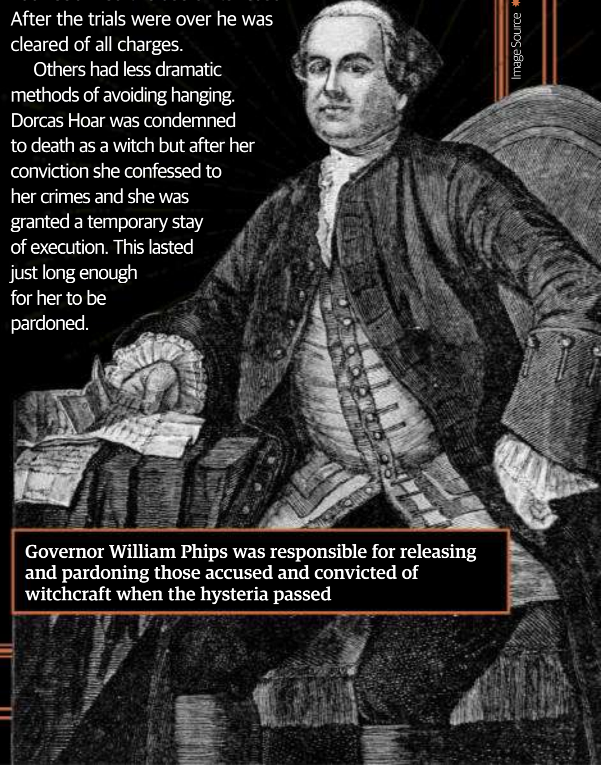
Image Source ✱ James Stark.

Captain John Alden was a Mayflower descendant and local celebrity, but was still denounced as a witch. He escaped from Boston jail and hid until the trials ended

The Salem trials saw 19 people hanged, one pressed, and several others dying in prison, yet over 200 individuals were accused of witchcraft. Not everyone who was called a witch ended up on the end of a noose.

Some people escaped execution by literally escaping. Mary Bradbury was described as transforming into a blue boar, among more nefarious acts of witchcraft. She survived the trials, according to one account, when her husband broke her out of the jail. She fled until the panic had abated and returned to her life later. John Alden was another accused, but because Salem prison was already full he was locked up in Boston. He fled the prison during the night and was hidden by his family until "the public had reclaimed the use of its reason". After the trials were over he was cleared of all charges.

Others had less dramatic methods of avoiding hanging. Dorcas Hoar was condemned to death as a witch but after her conviction she confessed to her crimes and she was granted a temporary stay of execution. This lasted just long enough for her to be pardoned.



Governor William Phips was responsible for releasing and pardoning those accused and convicted of witchcraft when the hysteria passed

Image Source ✱ Miscellaneous Items in High Demand, PPOC, Library of Congress.

Causes of the witch trials

Nothing like the Salem witch panic had been seen in New England before – understanding why it happened still puzzles historians

Written by Ben Gazur

Ever since the Salem witch trials, people have been looking back at the extraordinary scenes that occurred and asking "Just how could it have happened?" There were those at the time who questioned the reality of witches, and with the passage of time Salem seems ever more unlikely. Sometimes, though, that incredulity springs from modern sensibilities and misunderstandings.

Salem Village was nothing like a modern town. Once the sun set there was no light except that provided by candles or the Moon. Walking through the woods that enveloped a village at night could be dangerous and terrifying. Native attackers, wild beasts, and demonic pursuers lurked in the gloomy minds of Salem's residents. Who could blame them if their imagination filled in the black depths of the night with their fears? If not real witches, then what was striking at the people of Salem? To understand what happened there in 1692 we must understand not only the physical space they inhabited but also their mental space.

PURITAN SOCIETY

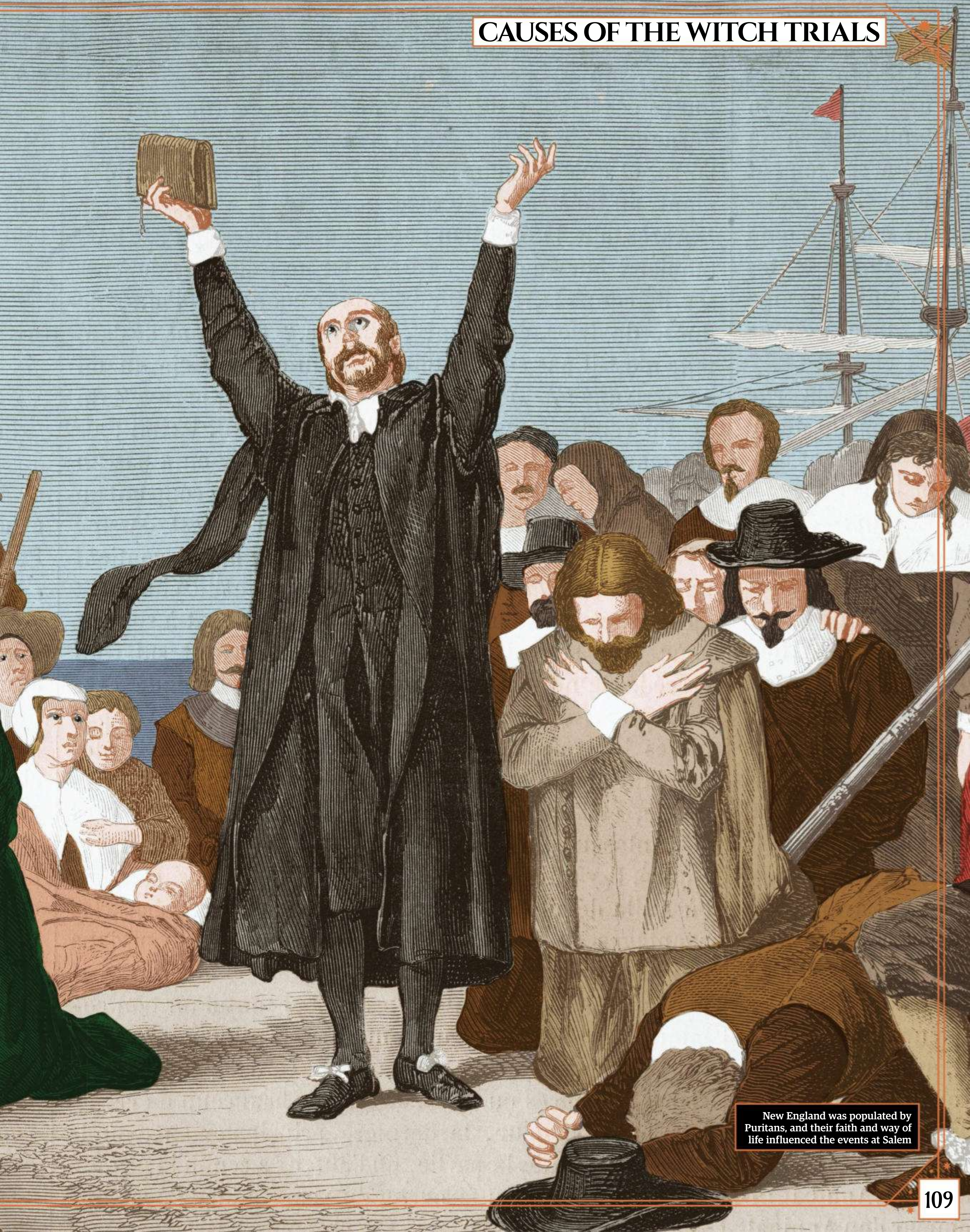
The settlements of New England were in large part created by religious non-conformists who emigrated from Britain. Many of the socially important families and large landowners were Puritan in their faith and viewed the whole world through religious lenses. Many came to the New World to escape not the strictness of the Anglican church but what they saw as its looseness. Richard Mather, father and grandfather of the Mathers who played such a large role in the Salem trials, had been driven from his English parish for refusing to wear the vestments of an Anglican vicar. It is likely he found that their finery smacked of the frivolity that Puritans loathed.

Puritans worked hard at their faith, as they worked hard at everything. Increase Mather was known to spend 16 hours per day in his study working. Farmers trying to scratch a living from the earth worked every hour God sent and still had to pray for a bountiful harvest. The vagaries of weather offered many opportunities for interpreting God's actions. When a heavy hailstorm smashed a window, Cotton Mather suggested it was sent as practice for the end of days.

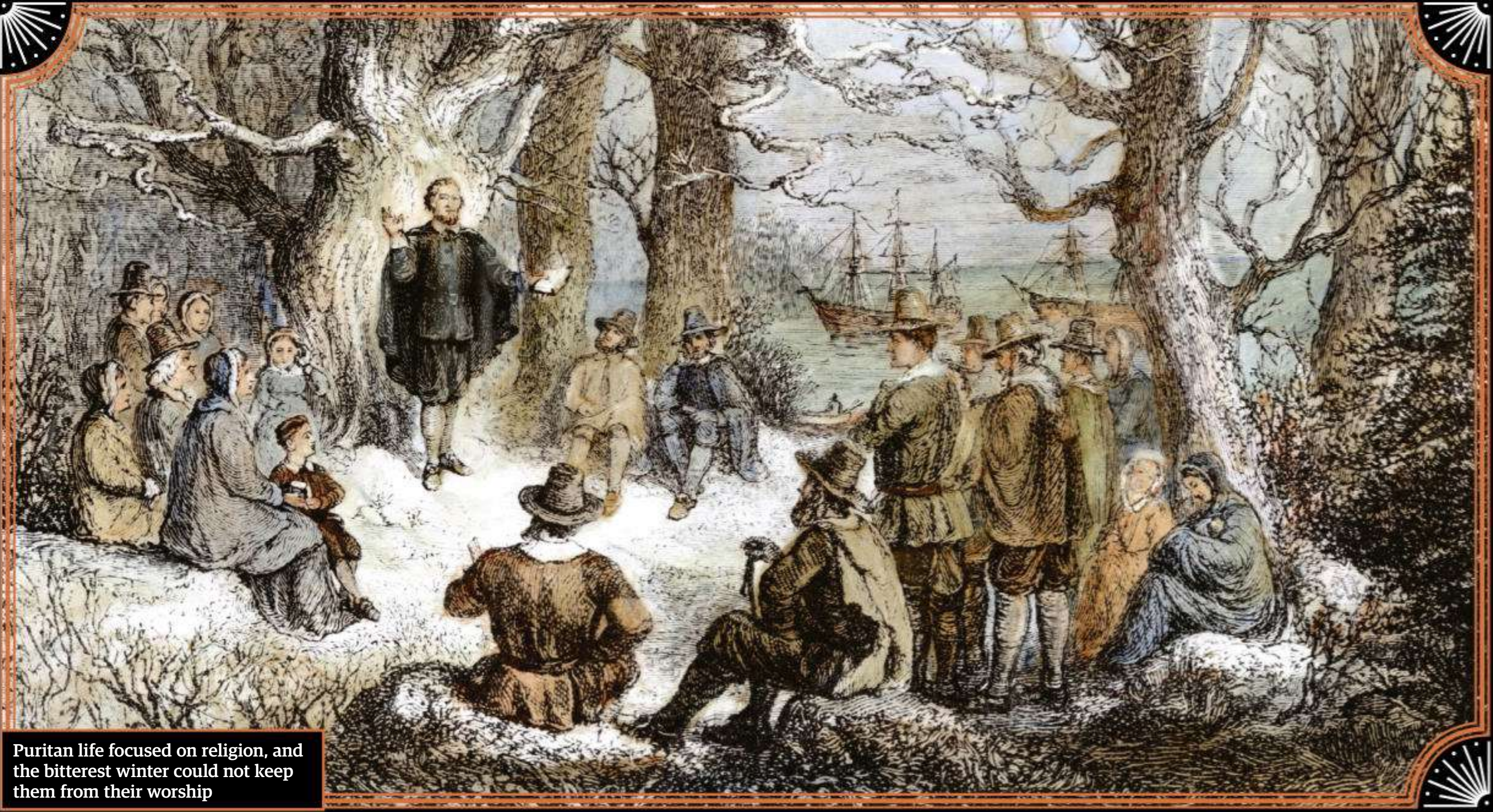
Life was precarious for everyone and even a mild illness might prove fatal. A Puritan always had to be ready to meet their maker. Explanations for death and illness were always to be found in sin. One minister felt his wife had perished because he had enjoyed sex with her too much. Trivialities were therefore not highly prized by the Puritans.

For young children the constant pressure to behave like an adult and to be constantly prepared for your own death must have been stifling. Emotions were to be controlled. Beatings were common and delivered for the child's benefit, so

Image Source ✱ Getty Images



New England was populated by Puritans, and their faith and way of life influenced the events at Salem



Puritan life focused on religion, and the bitterest winter could not keep them from their worship

Image Source ✱ Darley.

parents were taught. Even in church, a child who fell asleep during a lengthy sermon might be clouted on the head with a stick.

Some have seen in the boredom of a Puritan child's life the genesis of the Salem witch hunts. It has been suggested the in the pressured home of Reverend Parris the girls latched on to the stories of witchcraft and magic told to them by Tituba, the household slave. Having few other outlets for their imagination, the theory goes, they obsessed and played with the idea of being targeted by witches, little knowing what havoc they were unleashing.

With Puritanism inculcated from birth, it was inevitable that hard Protestantism should come to dominate not just the home lives of New Englanders but their politics. Having journeyed across an ocean in the hope of leading more repressed lives, they wanted a political system that would support their beliefs. Harsh laws were drafted and punishments inflicted in public. When one Captain Kimble returned from a three-year voyage and greeted his wife with a kiss, he was placed in the pillory for two hours – as a lesson against licentiousness.

When leaders were not willing to insist on the following of Puritan practice the people of the colonies were always willing to force them out. The 1689 Boston Revolt drove out governor Edmund Andros for, among other things, his perceived privileging of Anglicanism, and ending local representation. With Andros overthrown it was Puritan preacher Increase Mather who was charged with getting the British Crown to send them a governor more suited to Puritan tastes. What they got was a governor willing, at least at first, to allow a witch hunt.

A TOWN DIVIDED

There were two Salems in 1692. Salem Town boasted a fine harbour and regular trade with Europe. 2000 people called it home. Not everyone was content there and sought the freedom and larger lands offered by the wilderness. Salem Village was formed some five miles from the town, but this was not far enough to stop arguments flaring up between them.

Salem Village was made up of around 50 homesteads, and almost immediately they insisted on their independence from the town. The farmers resented having to stand watch to protect Salem Town, and wanted funds to create their own meeting hall in the village. In 1672 the village was created its own parish, with the rights to appoint a minister. But the village's ministers would prove to be anything but a blessing to them.

The Salem villagers lived in fear of raids by Native Americans, many having already fled from war

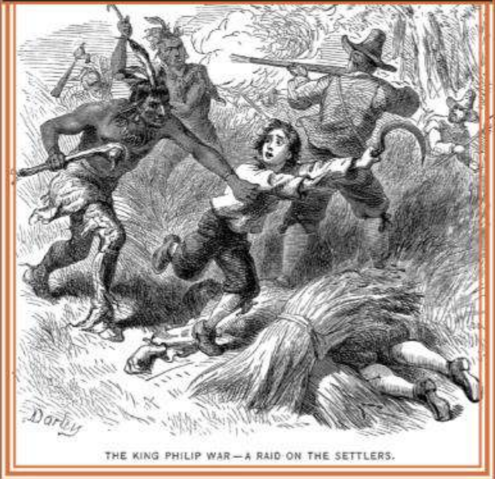

Darley
THE KING PHILIP WAR—A RAID ON THE SETTLERS.

Image Source ✱ Darley.

The first minister to Salem Village was James Bayley, and he broke the village into factions. Being just three years out of Harvard, Bayley was not experienced in preaching at all, let alone to a tense community like Salem Village. Bayley felt himself slighted when the village failed to build him a promised parsonage. While some villagers supported him, others complained to Salem Town and the affair ended in lawsuits being filed by both sides. Bayley's daughter married one of the richest men in the village, Thomas Putnam, but eventually Bayley had to withdraw from Salem – though the scars he left on the community remained.

The next minister appointed by Salem Village was George Burroughs, who at age 28 had already served as a minister in frontier parishes. On arrival, Burroughs and his family lodged with one of the Putnams at first, before a parsonage was built for them. Despite this promising start Burroughs suffered in his ministry. The village failed to pay him his expected salary and left him so poor that when he was widowed he had to borrow money for his wife's funeral. John Putnam would later pursue

Burroughs for some loaned money, and Burroughs left Salem to preach elsewhere. The animosity he generated would be remembered, to George Burrough's sorrow.

The third of Salem's ministers was the more urbane Deodat Lawson. The Putnams thoroughly approved of him and lobbied to have Lawson ordained. This would have given Salem Village a true church. Others in the village opposed his ordination on the grounds that they would have to give Lawson the land his parsonage stood on – land was always a contentious point with the farmers. The ordination never occurred and Lawson withdrew, for now, from Salem life.

Samuel Parris was next appointed to shepherd the restless flock of Salem. Parris was a worldly man who had been born in Barbados and worked as a merchant before becoming a minister. With his wife and children he brought with him two slaves to Salem; Tituba and John Indian. All of these outsiders would play a role in the witch trials to come.

Parris found his congregation a difficult one. Salem Town by this point had become fed up with dealing with the village's complaints. "If you will unreasonably trouble yourselves, we pray you not any further to trouble us," the town told the village. Parris would have to settle disagreements in the village himself.

The new minister found his preaching was ignored and his payments delayed or entirely unfulfilled, yet Parris was the first minister to Salem Village to be ordained. This man, who had seen more of the world than most of his congregation, told them that "if ever there were witches, Men and Women in covenant with the Devil, here are multitudes in New-England."

The minister struggled in the village, particularly when it came to the bitter winter of 1691. Part of his settlement was to be provided with firewood, but the village expected him to gather his own. The already cold Parris parsonage, soon to be the centre of accusations of witchcraft, was filled with frost.

It was a famously cold winter. The bread used in communion services froze to the plates and it was simply too cold for Samuel Parris to continue preaching on occasion. The pressure to find someone to blame was immense. If the weather was a sign from God then he had turned decidedly chilly on Salem.

There were other ways in which weather may have caused the Salem witch trials. One theory links the misery of the Parris household directly to the young girls experiencing the symptoms of bewitchment. Research has shown that in other places, severe cold weather is linked to an increase in the number of witch trials.

Furthering the tensions in the village were the rivalries that Parris, as its minister, was supposed to smooth over. Unfortunately Parris rarely calmed matters. A confrontation over a borrowed horse grew into a row when Parris considered the offered apology "mincing". In the ongoing struggles of the Putnams and the Porters he would be sorely tried to keep the peace.

The Putnams, as has already been seen, were an important family in Salem. Wealthy farmers, they were at the centre of life in the village, having been one of the first families to move to the village from Salem Town, and had always been on the side of the villagers against their town neighbours. The Porters had been early settlers too but had a more entrepreneurial spirit. They had trading interests in Salem Town and were not so focused on the village.

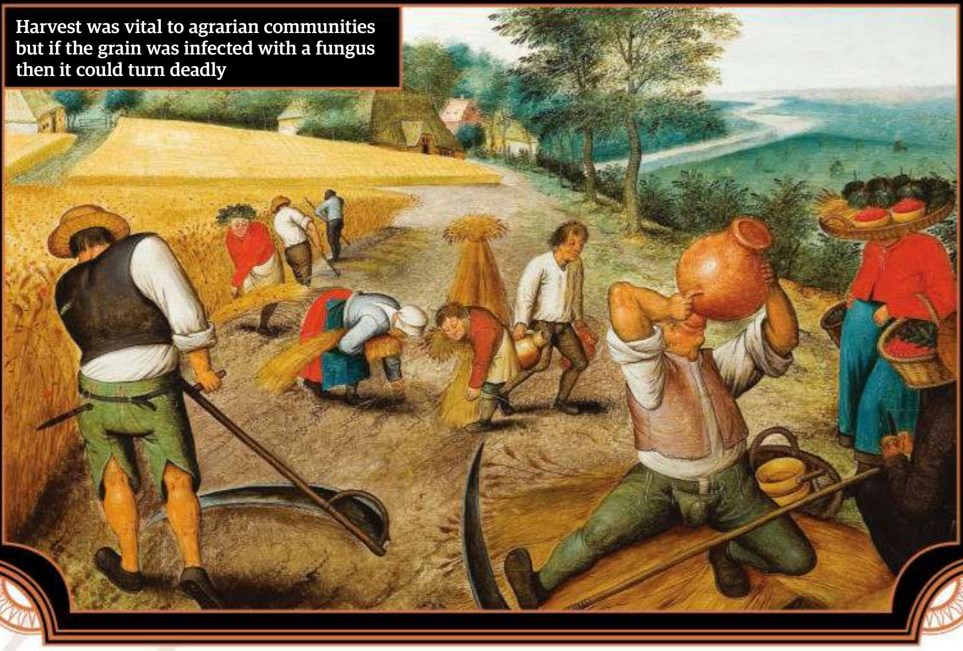
When Salem Village petitioned to be separated from the town, it was the Porters who most strongly resisted the move. This set them against much of the village. The disagreements between the Porters and the Putnams reached the courts in 1672 when Putnam lands were flooded by a Porter dam. In 1691 the Porters managed to take control of the village council from the Putnams. It was this Porter council that voted against raising a tax to pay Reverend

ERGOT POISONING

Claviceps purpurea is a fungus that grows on grains like barley and rye. Forming an unsightly mass on the grain, it is usually discarded during harvest. If it finds its way into food, however, it causes a terrifying condition known as ergotism; there are some who think the start of the Salem witch hysteria may have been caused by this fungus.

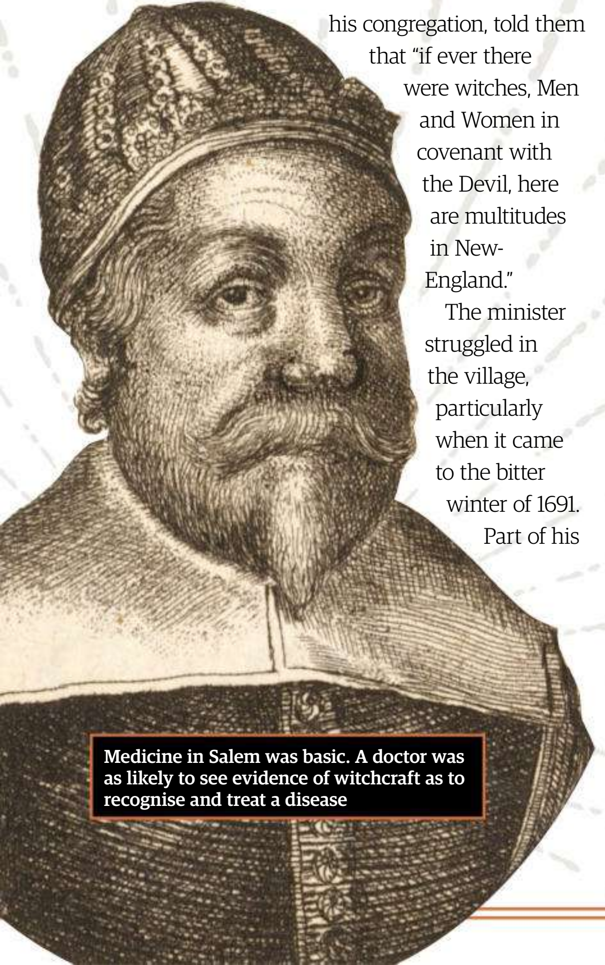
The fungus that causes ergotism grows best after a cold winter, such as that experienced by Salem in 1691, and on swampy land like that owned by Thomas Putnam. With bad weather and poor harvests, farmers are more likely to try and keep as much of their grain as they can, even those infected with ergot. People struck down by ergotism experience convulsions, fits, spasms, and feel pin pricks – all symptoms that the afflicted of Salem would show. Ergotism often produces vivid hallucinations, and young children would be particularly susceptible.

There are problems with the ergotism hypothesis about Salem, however. Ergot poisoning can cause gangrene, which none of the afflicted suffered. Usually whole communities, or at least households, are struck down, rather than individuals. It is also likely that a farming community would have recognised the symptoms of ergotism, well known since the Middle Ages as St Anthony's Fire.



Harvest was vital to agrarian communities but if the grain was infected with a fungus then it could turn deadly

Image Source ✱ Pieter Breughel the Younger.



Medicine in Salem was basic. A doctor was as likely to see evidence of witchcraft as to recognise and treat a disease

Image Source ✱ Wenceslaus Hollar.

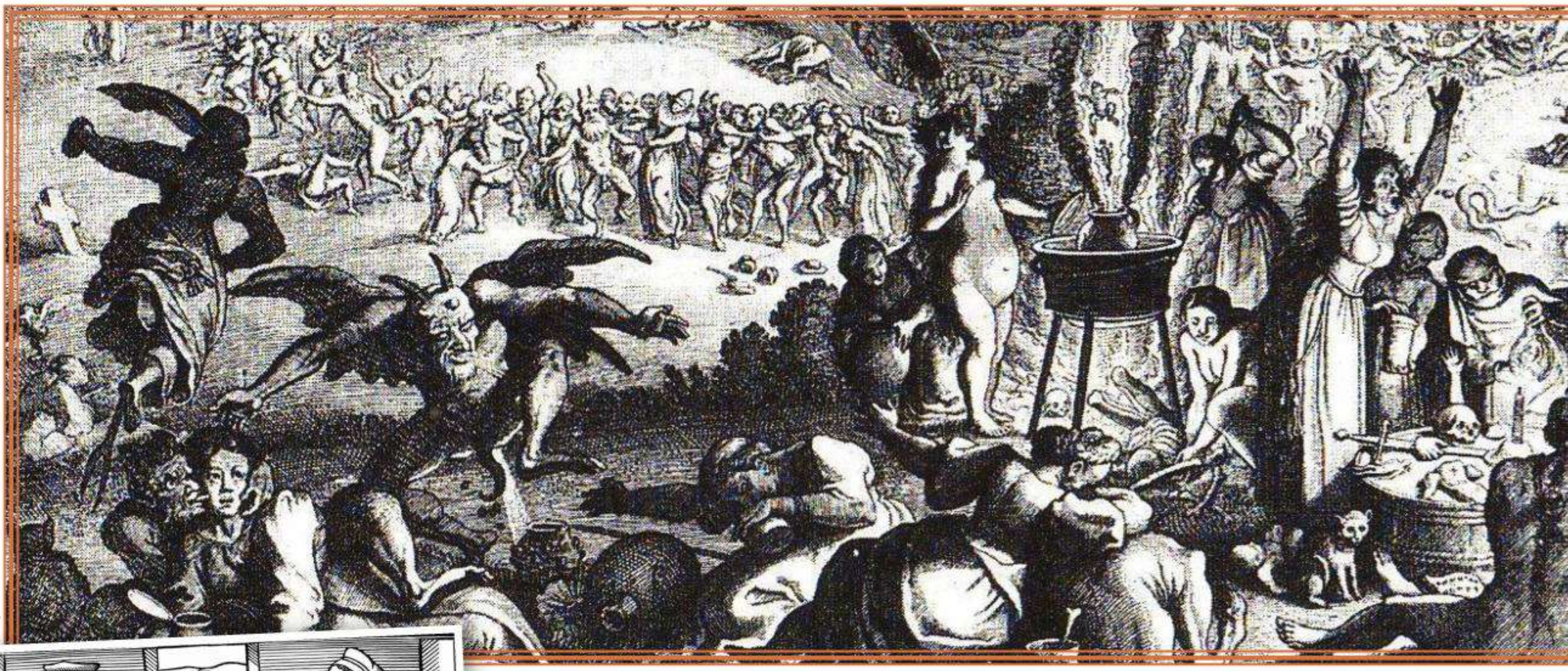
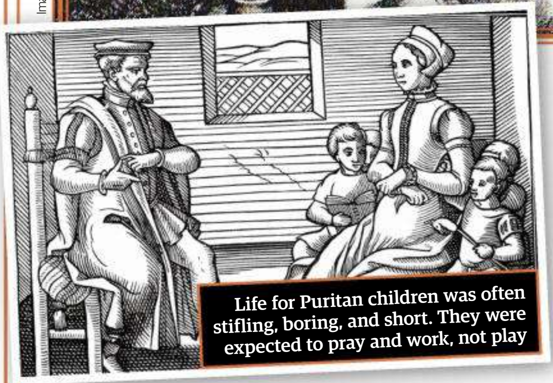


Image Source ✱ Michael Herr (1650).



Life for Puritan children was often stifling, boring, and short. They were expected to pray and work, not play

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Parris' wages. In a small village such as Salem, webs of marriage ties, personal disputes, and legal wrangles would all play their role in the trials to follow. The Porters would suffer for their interference in Putnam plans. Not all the tensions in the village came from within, however.

FEAR OF THE NATIVE

Salem was a town on the edge. As the Puritans saw it, they were the last outpost of civilisation in a country full of savages. Conflict between the Native Americans and the colonists simmered continually, several times breaking out into open warfare.

In 1675, local tribes led by Metacom ("King Philip") attacked half the towns of New England. The Mathers wrote a history of King Philip's War and described the horrors that colonists met on the first day of the war.

"June 24. (Midsummer-day) was appointed and attended as a day of solemn humiliation throughout the colony, by fasting and praying, to intreat the Lord to give success to the present expedition respecting the enemy. At the conclusion of that day of humiliation, as soon as ever the people in Swanzy were come from the place where they had been praying together, the Indians discharged a volley of shot, whereby they killed one man, and wounded others. Two men were sent to call a surgeon for the relief of the wounded, but the Indians killed them by the way: And in another part of the town six men were killed, so that there were nine Englishmen murdered this day. Thus did the war begin, this being the first English blood which was spilt by the Indians in an hostile way."

Typically, the Puritans were about God's work when they were attacked. It also helped foster a feeling of being under siege. But was the war sent by God, or the Devil? Mather thought the war might have been caused by the sins of New Englanders when they wore too much luxurious silk.

Mather also thought the war had demonic influences. They were fighting an enemy "whose chief sagamores are well known unto some of our captives to have been horrid sorcerers, and hellish conjurers, and such as conversed with demons." His father had also observed that the "barbarous Indians (like their Father the Devil… delighted in crueltyes)."

Other wars between the settlers and the Native Americans followed. King William's War began in 1688 and saw many villages burned and people killed. In the absence of any army or central authority to call on, villages such as Salem must have felt very isolated in the face of destruction.

The burning of homes in many settlements, along with the killings, sent many people fleeing to larger towns and other places for safety. Many, such as Abigail Williams, who lived in the Parris house, were left orphaned and alone after witnessing the slaying of their parents. Some of these would have suffered severe mental trauma from the war, not helped by being introduced to tightly-knit communities riven by jealousies. It is easy to see how mental illness may have played a role in the hysteria to come. Williams would become one of the first villagers to be bewitched.

WITCH HUNTS

People in Salem were well educated on witches. Cotton Mather wrote his 1689 book *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions* to "tell mankind that there are Devils and Witches: and that those night-birds least appear where the Day-light of the Gospel comes, yet New England has had examples of their existence and operation: and that not only the wigwams of Indians, where the pagan powaws often raise their masters, in the shapes of bears and snakes and fires but also in the homes of white English men and women."

Witches were all around the people of Salem and the Bible was extremely clear in its pronouncement: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live". The Mathers both wrote very popular books, which set out in gory details the things witches could do to unsuspecting Puritans. You had to always be on the look out for sins and follies that might let demons in. While witch trials in Europe were becoming less frequent at this time, stories about them in America remained universally of interest.

Cotton Mather's *Memorable Providences* dealt with a case of witchcraft closer to home. In 1688 Mather had been called to the Goodwin house in Boston to witness the bizarre afflictions of the children of the house. "Sometimes they would be Deaf, sometimes Dumb, and sometimes Blind, and often, all this at once." The children cried out that they were "cut

Many accusers in the Salem witch trials had experienced horrendous trauma during the recent King William's War

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The Massachusetts colonies covered a large area but were sparsely populated and isolated from neighbouring towns

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

with Knives, and struck with Blows that they could not bear". Symptoms similar to these would be at the heart of the Salem accusations and it is likely that the afflicted of Salem had heard of this case of bewitching. Mather's book was to be found in the library of Samuel Parris.

Cotton Mather visited the supposed witch in this case, Goody Glover, and found that she readily admitted to her relationship with the Devil. Convinced of her guilt, Mather felt it was his duty to warn other Christians of the dangers they were in. Yet it was not Mather who was the first person in Salem to diagnose witchcraft.

When the children of the Parris household were struck down with their extraordinary malady, no doubt prayers to the Almighty were tried, but they were practical enough to call for medical help. It was a doctor, William Griggs, who suggested the first were bewitched. This points to the strong belief in 'the invisible world' that existed in Puritan minds.

THE TRIALS AHEAD

Attempting to isolate any one cause in the Salem witch trials is impossible. It would be unbelievable if there was any single cause. Witch trials had occurred in New England before, but never with such fervour or so deadly a result. In Salem a number of factors must have come together to allow the hysteria to reach the mad pitch it did.

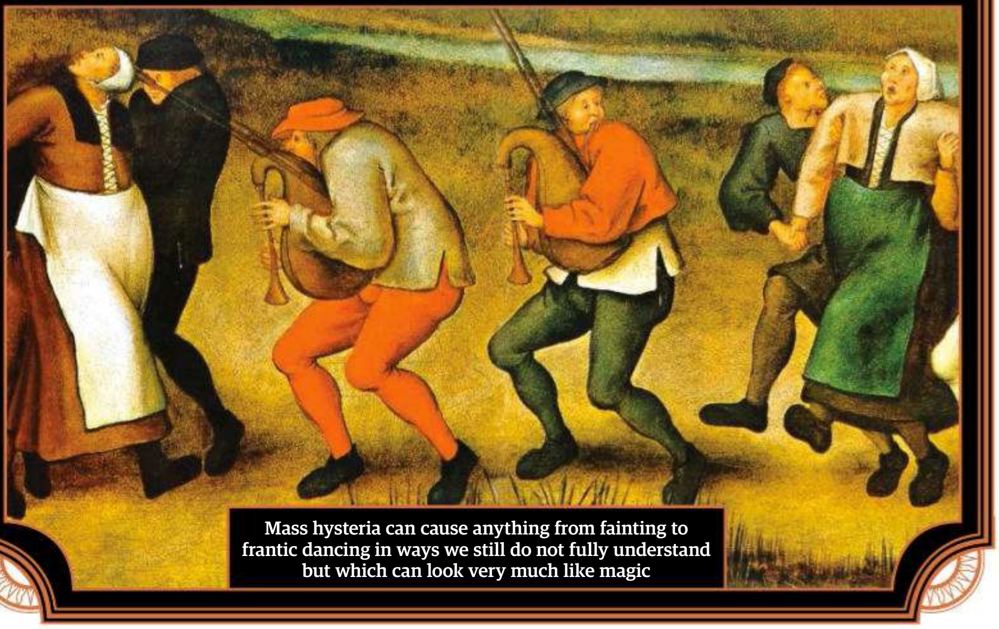
There are some today who would like to label the trials as simply a case of fraud or bored young girls acting out. This is to ignore the complexity of the situation and the tangled lives led by the people at the time. If we cannot recognise the risk factors, then we can never be sure a Salem will not happen again.

Mass Hysteria

Mass hysteria is possibly the most frequently referenced cause of the Salem witch trials. Mass hysteria is a recognised psychiatric condition where groups of people may begin to exhibit extremely distressing symptoms that spread from person to person with no obvious explanation. Commonly nausea, pain, and tiredness are noted by victims, but their behaviour can be more alarming. In 1518 a 'dancing sickness' struck Strasbourg. Hundreds of people felt compelled to dance. They danced for days on end. Some danced until they collapsed dead with heart attacks. Similar outbreaks had been recorded for centuries.

It is impossible to know exactly what may cause an outbreak of mass hysteria but certain groups are more likely to succumb to them. Young people are susceptible to many forms of mass hysteria. In the 20th century, schools saw waves of students laughing, or fainting, or vomiting, all without any obvious illness to cause their symptoms. People under severe pressure are also at greater risk. Following the Industrial Revolution, the staff of factories were often hit by mysterious and unexplainable maladies.

In the heated environment of Salem, mass hysteria may well have played a role in the spread of the devilish symptoms of the afflicted. But there was much more going on in that village that just a bizarre psychiatric condition.



Mass hysteria can cause anything from fainting to frantic dancing in ways we still do not fully understand but which can look very much like magic

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Pieter Breughel the Younger.

Meddling with magic

The accusations began with two girls, Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, who frightened themselves with folk magic and started experiencing supernatural 'fits'...

Written by Poppy-Jay Palmer

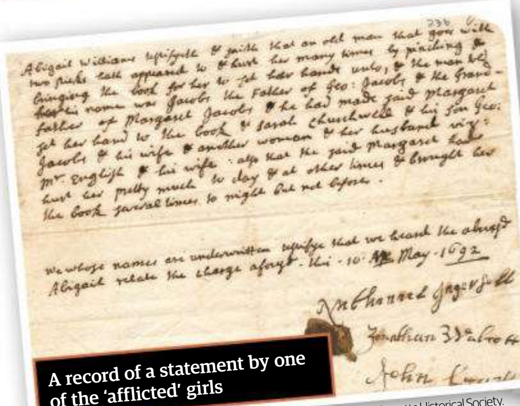
Several young girls experienced some peculiar happenings in the days leading up to the first accusation of the Salem witch trials. In January 1692, nine-year-old Elizabeth "Betty" Parris, the daughter of Salem Village's first ordained minister, and her 11-year-old cousin, Abigail Williams, started to have 'fits'. They broke out in fevers and cried out in pain. The fits grew even more alarming when the young girls began to contort themselves into strange positions, hide under furniture, throw objects around the room and make strange sounds, barking like dogs. After examining the children, local doctor William Griggs apparently found nothing physically wrong with them and thus concluded that the fits were supernatural occurrences, believing them to be possessed by the Devil.

> The two girls who started the witch panic had recently terrified themselves playing with divination spells

Parris and Williams weren't the only ones seemingly targeted by what they described as a 'devilish hand': a whole group of girls, all aged between nine and 20 years old, experienced strange symptoms and subsequently came forward to accuse a number of people of practicing witchcraft. Among those that had been "afflicted" with the fits were Ann Putnam Jr, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Booth, Mercy Lewis, Mary Warren and Elizabeth Hubbard. The latter would become famous for becoming the primary instigator of the trials, owing to being 17 years old when the trials began and therefore of legal age to testify.

Before the fits started, Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, as well as several of the other girls, had reportedly dabbled in folk magic themselves. They explored a number of divination techniques, and used eggs and a 'Venus glass', or mirror, to learn about their future husbands and social status. The practice, which is very similar to that known as oomancy, involves cracking eggs into a glass of hot water and reading fortunes from the shapes created by the separated egg whites. According to the book *A Modest Enquiry Into The Nature Of Witchcraft*, written by local minister Reverend John Hale, the girls became terrified and scared for their lives when one session with the Venus glass led to them spotting a shape in the egg whites that looked very much like a coffin.

It is believed by some that the girls were assisted in their fortune telling by Parris' father's slave woman Tituba, who allegedly practiced voodoo and was later accused of being a witch. However, the official court records from the trials contain no evidence that Tituba was ever involved.

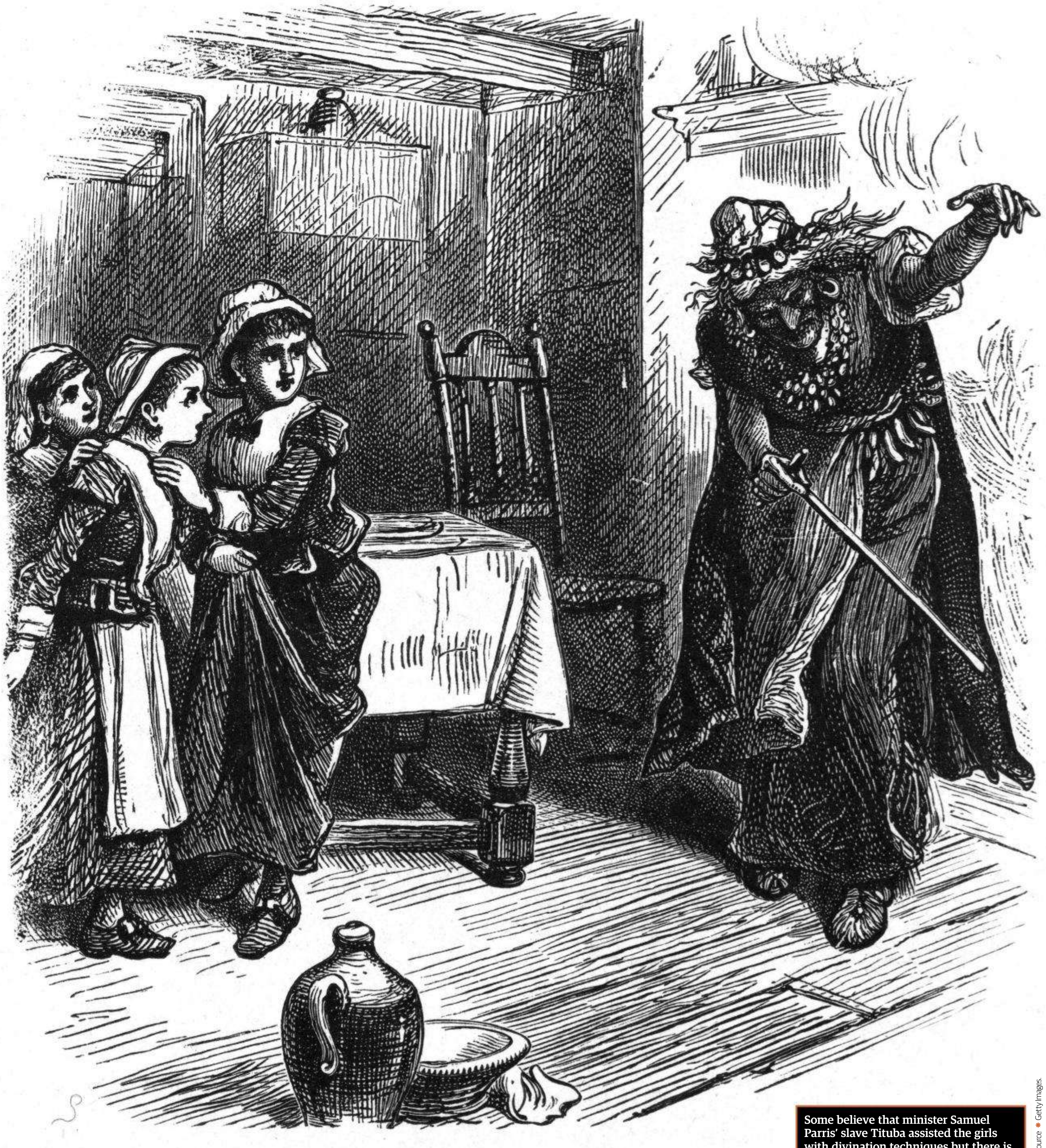


A record of a statement by one of the 'afflicted' girls

Image Source ✸ Massachusetts Historical Society.

Love magic was performed by white witches and cunning folk

Image Source ✸ Midnightblueowl.



Old Tituba the Indian.

Some believe that minister Samuel Parris' slave Tituba assisted the girls with divination techniques but there is no evidence to support this theory

Image Source ✱ Getty Images

Under an evil hand

When two young girls began to suffer a mysterious affliction, the good people of Salem had no idea their community was about to be torn apart

Written by Willow Winsham

It is as always worrying when a child falls ill. In mid January 1692, young Abigail Williams, niece of Samuel Parris, minister of Salem, Massachusetts, began to suffer from a mysterious and terrible condition. The afflicted girl cried out as she was pinched and bitten, her body twisted and convulsed so violently it was awful to witness. Sometimes she could not cry out at all; her mouth could not move, speech frozen in her throat.

Within days, Samuel Parris' daughter, Betty, was struck down by the same affliction that plagued her cousin. The pair were heartbreaking indeed in their torment, and their family and neighbours needed answers.

As the condition of the two girls worsened, the advice of Dr William Griggs, the physician of Salem Village, was sought. It was Griggs who eventually declared that Abigail and Betty were suffering from no natural illness: the girls had been bewitched.

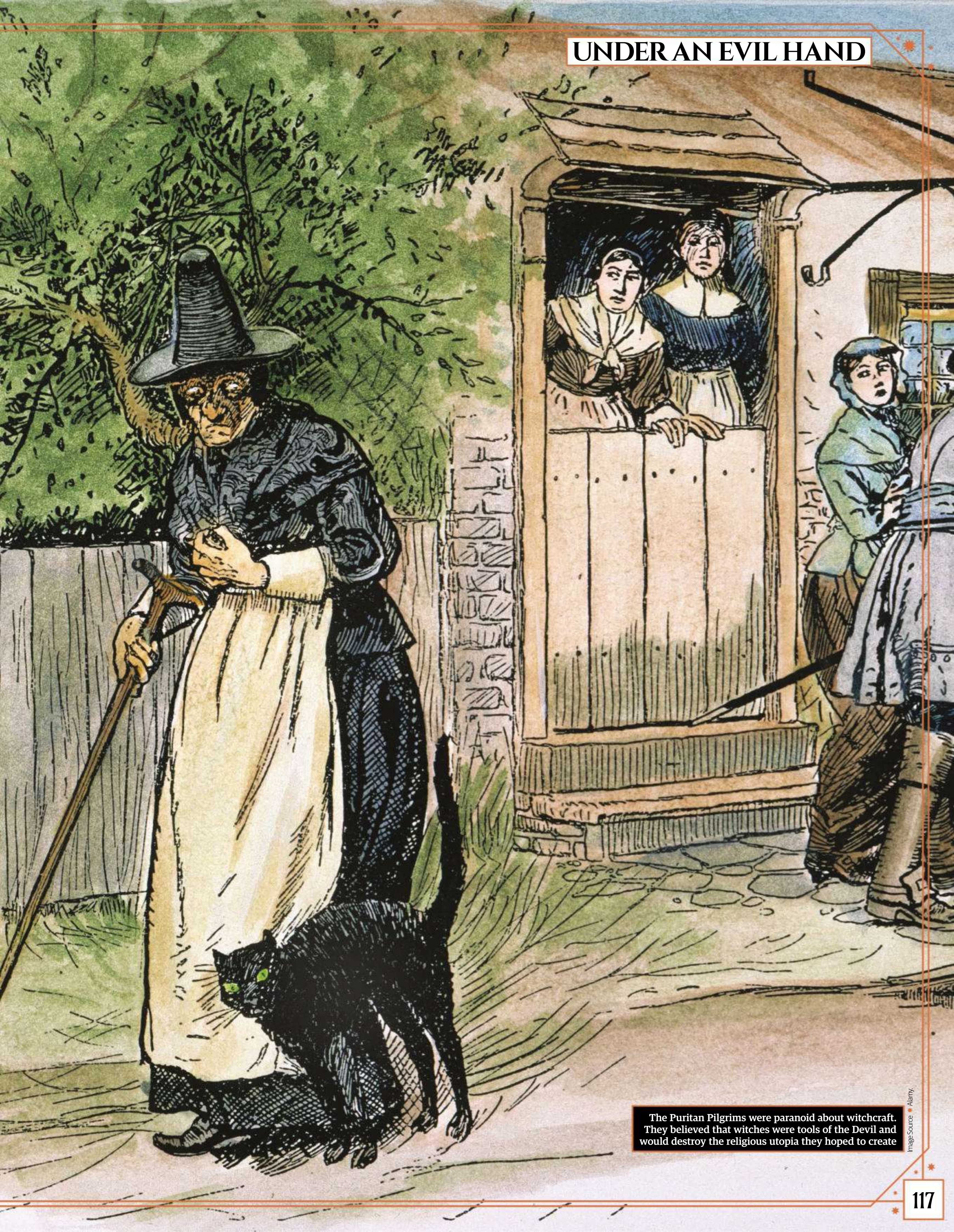
Such a verdict was far from out of the ordinary for the time, and raised two important questions. How to cure the suffering children, and who was responsible for their pitiful plight?

While Samuel Parris, as expected by his position, turned to the power of prayer for a solution, calling on like-minded individuals to pray and fast with him, others turned to different avenues for help. Mary Sibley, a near neighbour of the Parris household, embarked upon a course that would have disastrous consequences for the community in which they lived. Mary instructed Tituba, Parris' slave, and her husband John, to make a witch cake. A form of counter magic, said to have been brought to America from England with earlier settlers, the 'cake' was far from appetising. Made from a mixture of rye meal and urine from the afflicted girls, it was baked in the fire ashes before being consumed by the family dog. It was believed that this would reveal vital information: the identity of the person who was behind the bewitchment.

Counter magic was a common device to use against witchcraft in 17th-century England; the Pilgrims had brought it with them

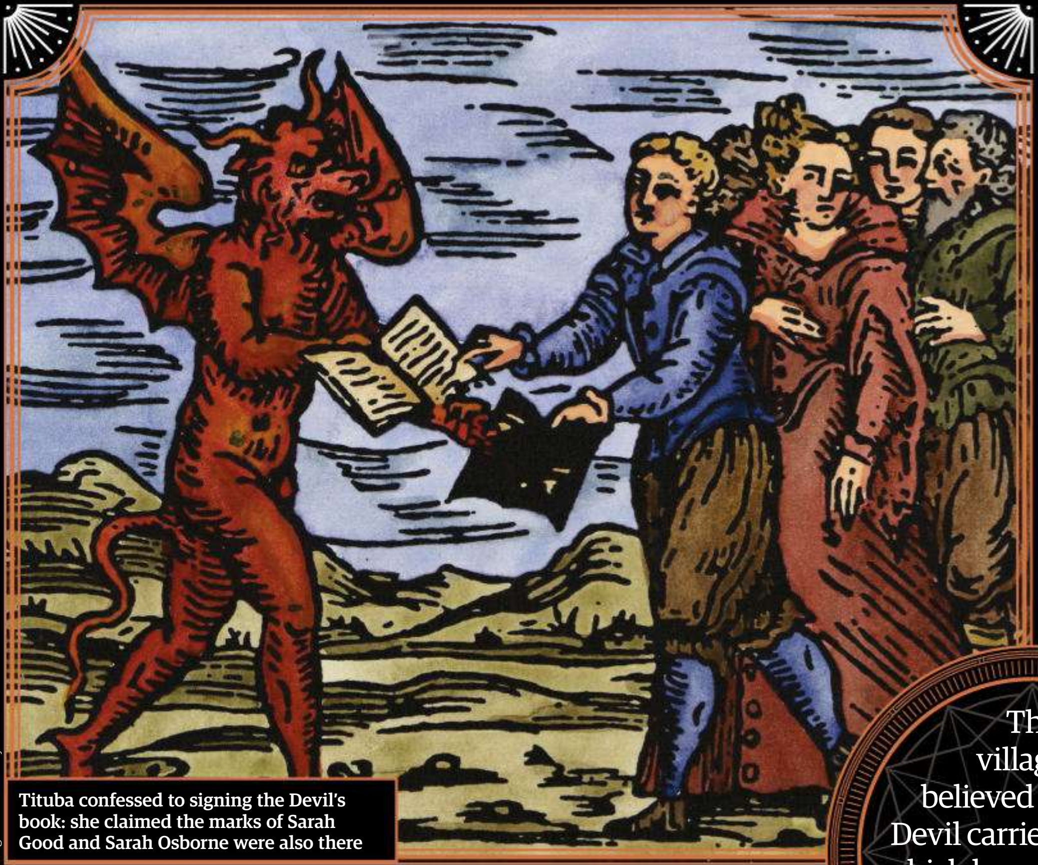
Unfortunately for Tituba, the ritual seemed to work only too well. Abigail and Betty named her as their tormentor, blaming the powerless slave for their condition. Not only was Tituba responsible for pinching and prodding them, she appeared in spectral form to the girls, while remaining invisible to everyone else.

Although Mary Sibley no doubt acted with the best of intentions, her actions were received with horror by Reverend Parris. Although counter magic such as witch cakes was popular, the educated classes frowned upon using magic, in whatever form, to combat bewitchment. It was seen as being



The Puritan Pilgrims were paranoid about witchcraft. They believed that witches were tools of the Devil and would destroy the religious utopia they hoped to create

Image Source ✱ Alamy.



Tituba confessed to signing the Devil's book: she claimed the marks of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were also there

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

"On 29 Feb 1692, complaints were made against the three women"

as bad as the magic it was trying to disarm, and, as Samuel Parris himself declared, asking the Devil himself for help in battling the Devil. Indeed, he, and others, saw this lapse in judgement as the cause of the terrible times to follow, the unleashing of evil power amongst the inhabitants of Salem.

One thing that Parris could not ignore was the accusations of Abigail and Betty against Tituba. After consultation with his fellow ministers and gentlemen, Parris turned once more to prayer for guidance. It was then that he instigated the questioning of Tituba. She was very clear where she stood on the matter: she had made the witch cake as instructed by Mary Sibley, but she had not bewitched the girls. She had learned counter magic from her mistress in her own country, but denied categorically being a witch herself.

Matters might have rested there, but unfortunately for Tituba and the rest of the residents of Salem Village, as February drew towards a close, two more individuals fell under the same affliction as Abigail and Betty. Ann Putnam Junior and Betty Hubbard complained of the now-familiar symptoms of being pricked and pinched by invisible forces, while also suffering fits and seeing spectral forms. 12-year-old Ann and 17-year-old Betty – a servant of none other than the Dr Griggs, who had first diagnosed witchcraft in the Parris household – accused three women of being the cause of their torment: Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and the unfortunate Tituba.

On 29 Feb 1692, official complaints were made against the three accused women. Ann's father, Thomas Putnam, supported by his own brother and two others, stood before John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin, the local magistrates, and accused them of harming the four young victims by witchcraft.

As if to confirm the guilt of Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba, Ann Putnam and Betty Hubbard were seen to suffer afresh shortly after the complaints were made and into the day that followed.

It was time for the accused to be questioned. In a departure from usual practice, the suspected witches were questioned in the local meetinghouse – the largest building in Salem Village – before a large public crowd. It would have been difficult indeed for the three no doubt terrified women to hear the questions posed to them over the din, as their neighbours and families interjected their thoughts and information into proceedings.

Sarah Good was the first to be interrogated. What form of evil spirit, John Hathorne demanded to know, was her familiar? Furthermore, had she entered into a contract with the Devil himself? Sarah replied that she had not, and likewise denied having hurt the children who accused her. She was not to be allowed to escape however, as the suffering girls once more took centre stage.

The villagers believed that the Devil carried a ledger, which he made people sign in order to give them the power of witchcraft

Abigail Williams, Betty Parris, Ann Putnam and Betty Hubbard were told to look carefully at the woman who stood before them. Was the person who caused their suffering there? The girls declared that she was, confirming the matter by displaying fresh fits and terrible symptoms moments later. If she was not responsible, demanded Hathorne, how did Sarah explain the suffering before her? It was not her, Sarah insisted – on the contrary, the girls' torments were bring caused by Sarah Osborne.

Responses to this accusation were decidedly sceptical. Even Sarah Good's own husband, not to mention the others gathered in the meetinghouse, believed her to be a witch. It was then that Sarah Osborne herself was questioned. Like the woman before her, she denied possessing a familiar spirit or having made a contract with the Devil. When asked what she knew of Sarah Good, Osborne denied any great familiarity with her, and was further uncowed

Samuel Sibley stabbed the spectral form of Sarah Good at Betty Hubbard's insistence, hoping by doing so to banish the witch

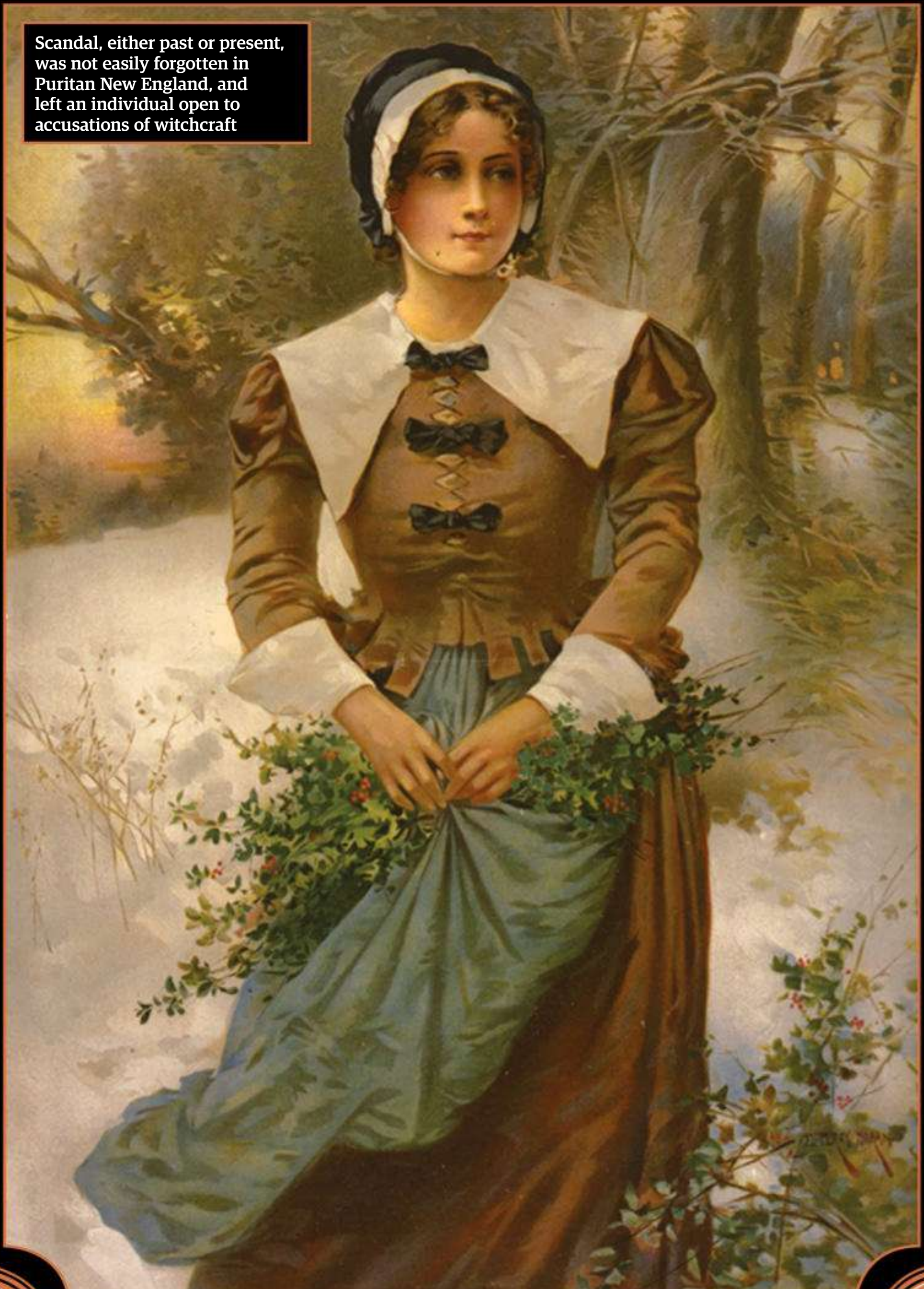
Image Source ✱ Creative Commons; Wellcome Collection Gallery.

SALEM'S LIKELY WITCHES

Usually old, sometimes ugly, often female. The witch of children's fairytales still lingers as a stereotype today. Court records show that across Europe the majority of those tried as witches were women, even though white witches and cunning folk were just as likely to be men. However, as the Church became more intent on stamping out all forms of heresy, women became the main focus of witch hunts.

From the 15th century onwards, women were seen as increasingly vulnerable to the temptations of magic. They were viewed as sex-mad and seriously stupid by many, and clerics writing on demonology described lust-filled women who were seduced into evil by the Devil and took part in unholy orgies.

Later reformers took an equally dim view. For Martin Luther, women were so weak that they were easily won over by the promises of magic. In the 16th and 17th centuries, witches were nearly always women, and any men caught in the act were usually seen to have been tempted over to darkness by a wicked woman. But when the wave of persecutions ended and witchcraft was no longer pursued through the courts, the wise folk recorded in local communities once more featured men as well as women.



Scandal, either past or present, was not easily forgotten in Puritan New England, and left an individual open to accusations of witchcraft

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division.

According to Tituba's testimony, Sarah Good's familiar spirit was a yellow bird that sucked from between the witch's fingers

Image Source ✱ Creative Commons; Jon Sullivan.

when presented with the accusation Good had made against her. She could not be expected to know, Sarah Osborne pointed out, whether the Devil went about imitating her form, much less what he did while impersonating her. Despite this clever response, Osborne's words were no match for the evidence of the victims themselves: the girls duly identified Sarah as one of their tormentors, before falling into fits once more.

When Tituba came to be questioned, instead of the blanket denial of witchcraft she had made previously, her story changed. Although still maintaining she was not a witch, this time, before the magistrates and the people of Salem, Tituba confessed that she had used malefic magic, along with providing further information about her fellow accused, much to the shock and delight of those assembled. First and foremost, she was very clear that Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were responsible for tormenting the afflicted girls – she had witnessed it herself. She had also been approached by the Devil himself, who had demanded she serve him. Tituba then went on to furnish the listening crowd with details of the familiar spirits of the two women and creatures she herself had witnessed – a large black dog, a hog, and two cats, one red and one black. These animals were of the Devil, and they were clear in their message: she, Tituba, must hurt the girls.

Tituba protested that she had not wanted to do harm to the children, and it was only after the diabolically channelled creatures threatened her with far worse treatment that she finally gave in and did as they instructed.

The interrogations were brought to an abrupt end as Betty Hubbard suffered a fit greater than previously witnessed. In a further twist , Tituba herself was suddenly seen to suffer in a similar way to the girls. Blinded, and unable to speak the words she wanted, Tituba blamed her fellow accused, saying Sarah Good and Osborne were punishing her for her confession.

Unfortunately for Tituba and the others, this was only the beginning: who would be accused next, and what would be the terrible outcome?

Devil in our midst

From March to June 1692, the good people of Salem were besieged by Satan and the witches who did his bidding, with fatal consequences

Written by Willow Winsham

After the initial arrests and Tituba's confession, it was not long before growing panic was clear amongst the inhabitants of Salem Village, and fresh accusations were made. The spectral forms of Sarah Good, her four-year-old daughter, and Elizabeth Proctor – a woman whose grandmother had been accused of witchcraft – were busy tormenting Ann Putnam Jr and others in the first week of March.

Although the first to face accusations were vulnerable to being branded a witch, the next two women to be named were, at first glance, unlikely suspects indeed. Martha Corey and 70-year-old Rebecca Nurse were accused by Ann Putnam. According to Ann, Martha Corey's spectre pinched and poked her most painfully over a period of days, until 12 April, when Ann's uncle, deacon Edward Putnam, paid Martha a visit. Despite her protestations that she was a religious woman and had nothing to do with witchcraft, Putnam and those that accompanied him did not believe Martha's words, especially as Ann had supposedly foretold several things Martha was to say. The suspicions against her were confirmed when, on 14 March, Martha visited the Putnam household and Ann and the Putnam's maid, Mercy Lewis, fell into such tortures that Martha had to leave.

In an alarming development, afflicted girls often found themselves, to the great consternation of those present, drawn towards the open fire. Seemingly about to walk into the flames, they were rescued in the nick of time from a disastrous fate. When questioned, the girls all corroborated each other's evidence, and Abigail Williams and Betty Hubbard likewise spoke out against Martha Corey. On 18 March, Ann Putnam's mother reported a terrifying attack by their new nemesis; caught unawares while resting, Martha Corey attacked her, before demanding she sign the book she held – a book, Ann was certain, that belonged to the Devil.

Around the same time, Ann likewise spoke out against Rebecca Nurse, and the other afflicted girls soon followed suit in accusing both women of tormenting them and causing great suffering. Although seemingly unlikely witches, scandal lurked beneath the surface. Martha Corey had, before her current marriage, born an illegitimate (and mixed race) son, and Rebecca Nurse's family was involved in land disputes with several members of the Putnam family. Rumours and gossip were enough to bring these two women to mind as potential threats, as the young girls became the mouthpieces for the village's underlying tensions and resentments, giving them voice with fatal outcomes.

Martha Corey was arrested and questioned on 21 March. Despite swearing her innocence, her words fell on deaf ears, Abigail Williams declaring that a black man spoke in Martha's ear, telling her what to do and say. The afflicted girls were on top form that day, suffering fits, and such tortures that inspired great horror and sympathy in those who witnessed their suffering. When begged by the

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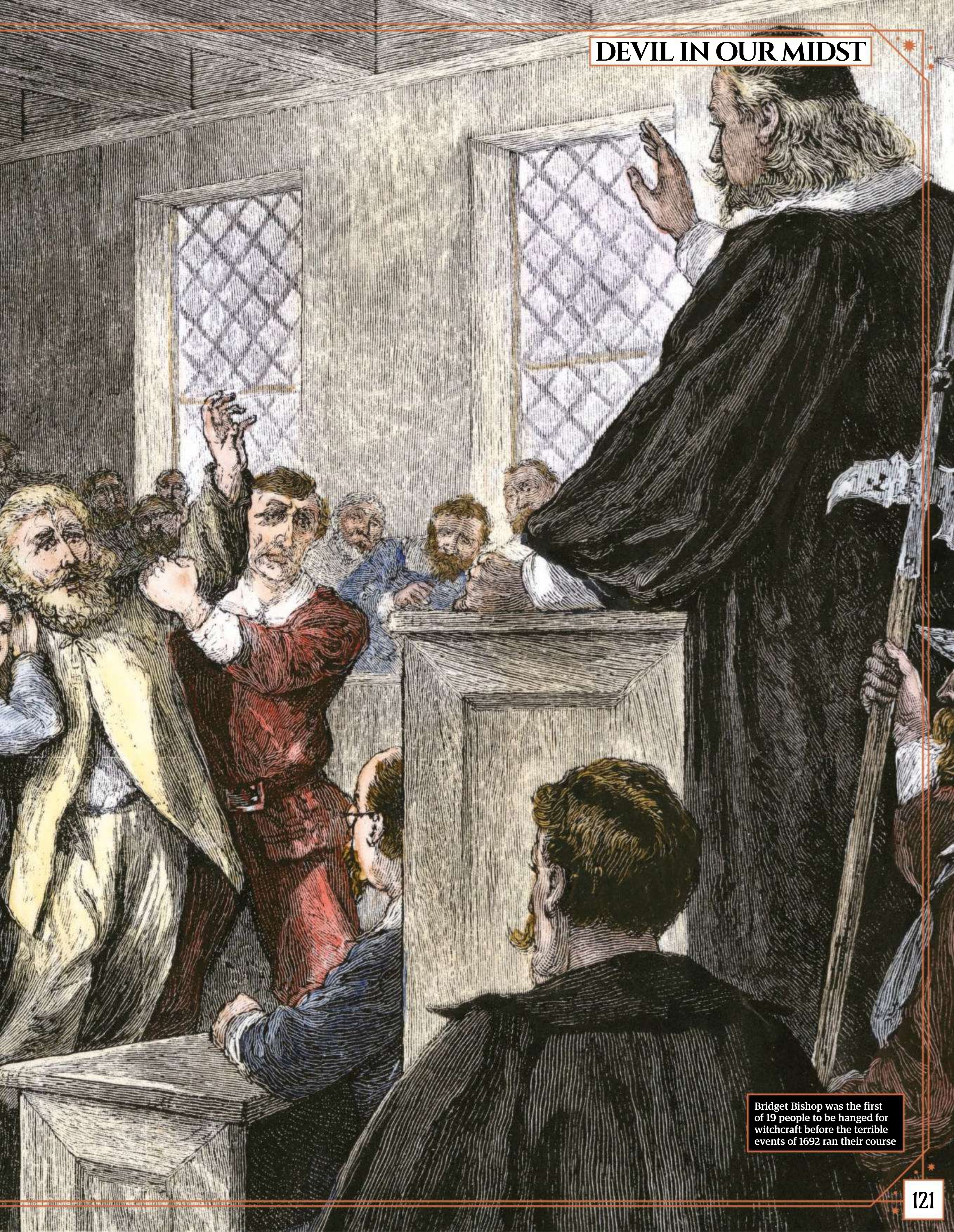


Bridget Bishop was the first of 19 people to be hanged for witchcraft before the terrible events of 1692 ran their course

WHAT PRICE DISSENT?

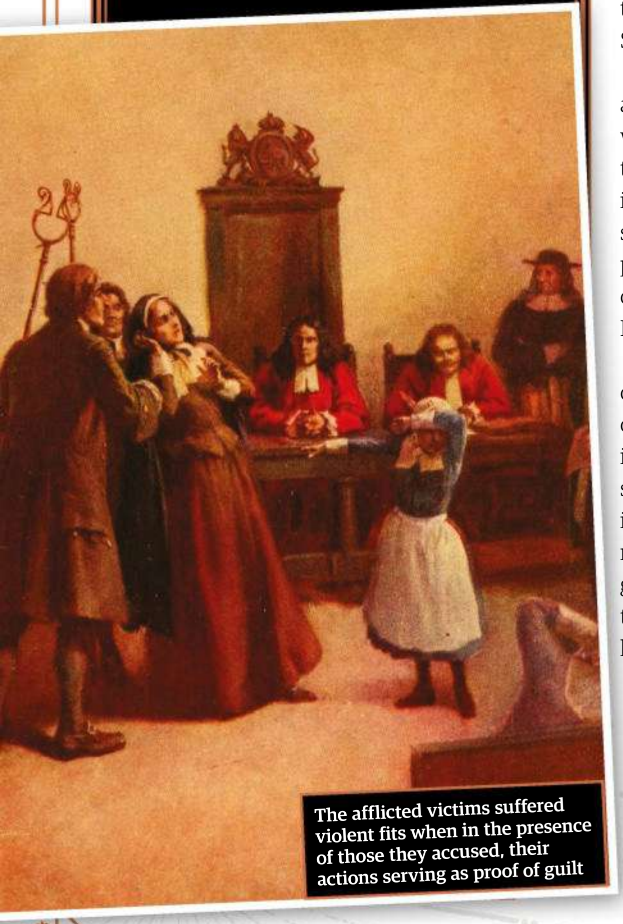
Those who did not display the right amount of sympathy towards the afflicted ran the very real risk of being accused themselves. Samuel Parris and Deodat Lawson made it clear in their March sermons that the tormented victims were to be treated with utmost sympathy and understanding, but there were those who failed to heed the preachers' warnings.

John Proctor was accused after failing to support his maidservant, Mary Warren, when she became afflicted. Far from seeking redress on her behalf, Proctor threatened to beat the young woman, voicing his vitriol against Mary and the other victims to a scandalised Samuel Sibley.

Edward Bishop, husband of Sarah Bishop, found himself accused after expressing his scepticism. He struck Tituba's husband, John Indian, in order to bring him out of a fit, declaring his belief that the rest of the afflicted could be cured the same way. This was enough to have him accused of witchcraft shortly after.

Bridget Bishop, during her examination, did not display the expected sympathy towards the girls in their fits. When asked how she felt at seeing their plight, she rashly admitted it did not bother her, sealing her fate.

Not only did 70-year-old Rebecca Nurse remain suspiciously dry-eyed in face of the suffering girls, when questioned, she admitted – albeit reluctantly – that she did not think they suffered against their will.



The afflicted victims suffered violent fits when in the presence of those they accused, their actions serving as proof of guilt

Image Source ✱ Frank O. Small (1860-1915).

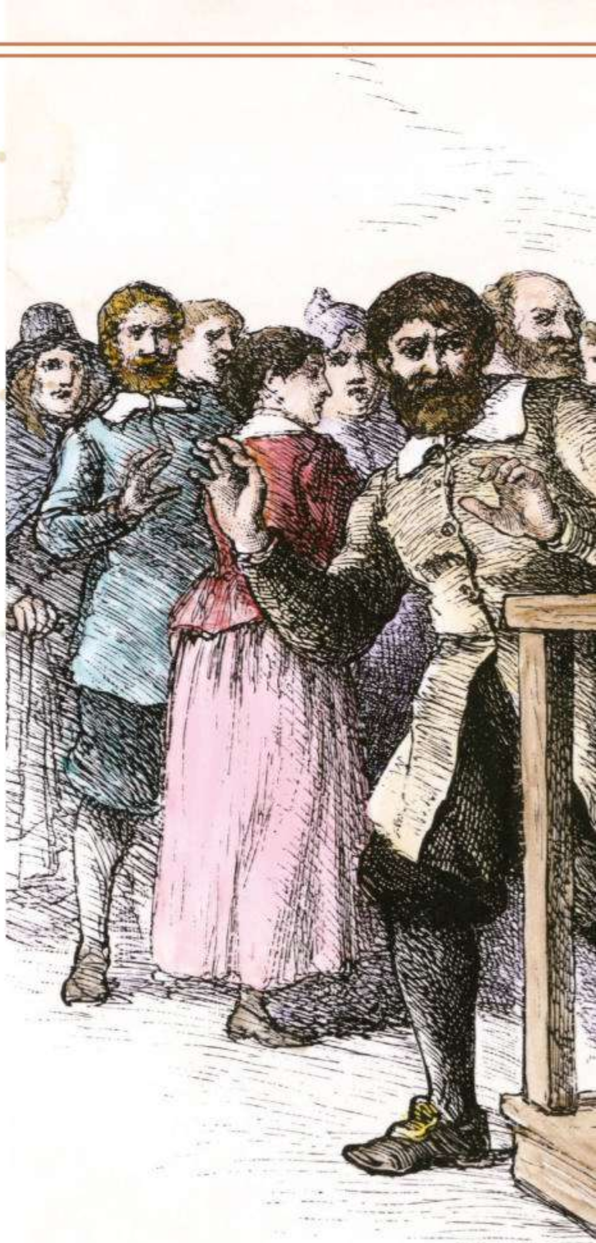
girls to confess, the bewildered woman said she would only too gladly, but she could not as she was innocent. When Martha moved her hands, the girls said they were pinched. Martha moved her feet, only for the girls to stamp in return. Still maintaining her innocence, Martha was sent to jail in Salem Town: the girls stopped suffering symptoms shortly afterwards.

A few days later on 24 March, Rebecca Nurse had a chillingly similar experience at her own examination: as she spread her hands, the girls suffered as if caused by her movements, the girls declaring that the black man who would become a staple of such examinations was whispering in the old woman's ear. Four-year-old Dorcas Good was likewise questioned in the hubbub of the crowded meetinghouse: unsurprisingly, the evidence was against them, and, with no sensitivity to their ages, the elderly matron and young girl were both imprisoned. Although Rebecca maintained her innocence, young Dorcas Good confessed.

The same day, a sermon was preached by Deodat Lawson, shedding light on the religious viewpoint of what was taking place. The Devil, in the form of the witches he recruited, was indeed among the good people of Salem. However, this could only happen because God himself had permitted it. It was a message, a stark one, that their actions had displeased God, and this had been sent upon them to change matters. Samuel Parris also spoke on the theme, leaving those who listened in no doubt that Satan moved among them.

What was the cause of this fresh raft of accusations? Magistrates Hathorne and Corwin were at least in part to blame as they had neglected to follow one crucial piece of guidance when it came to questioning accuser, witnesses and suspects alike: those examined were questioned publicly, and it was this factor that aided the spread of accusations and fanned the flames of hysteria in March 1692.

By the end of March, then, the usually well-ordered Puritan households of the Putnams and others were in chaotic disorder. It was not only in the privacy of the home however; Sunday sermons at the meetinghouse were also thrown into disorder, with the afflicted girls crying out and making impertinent pronouncements throughout, greatly disrupting proceedings. On the last day of the month, a general fast was held, in the hope of helping the suffering girls, but to no avail, as fresh accusations were soon to follow.

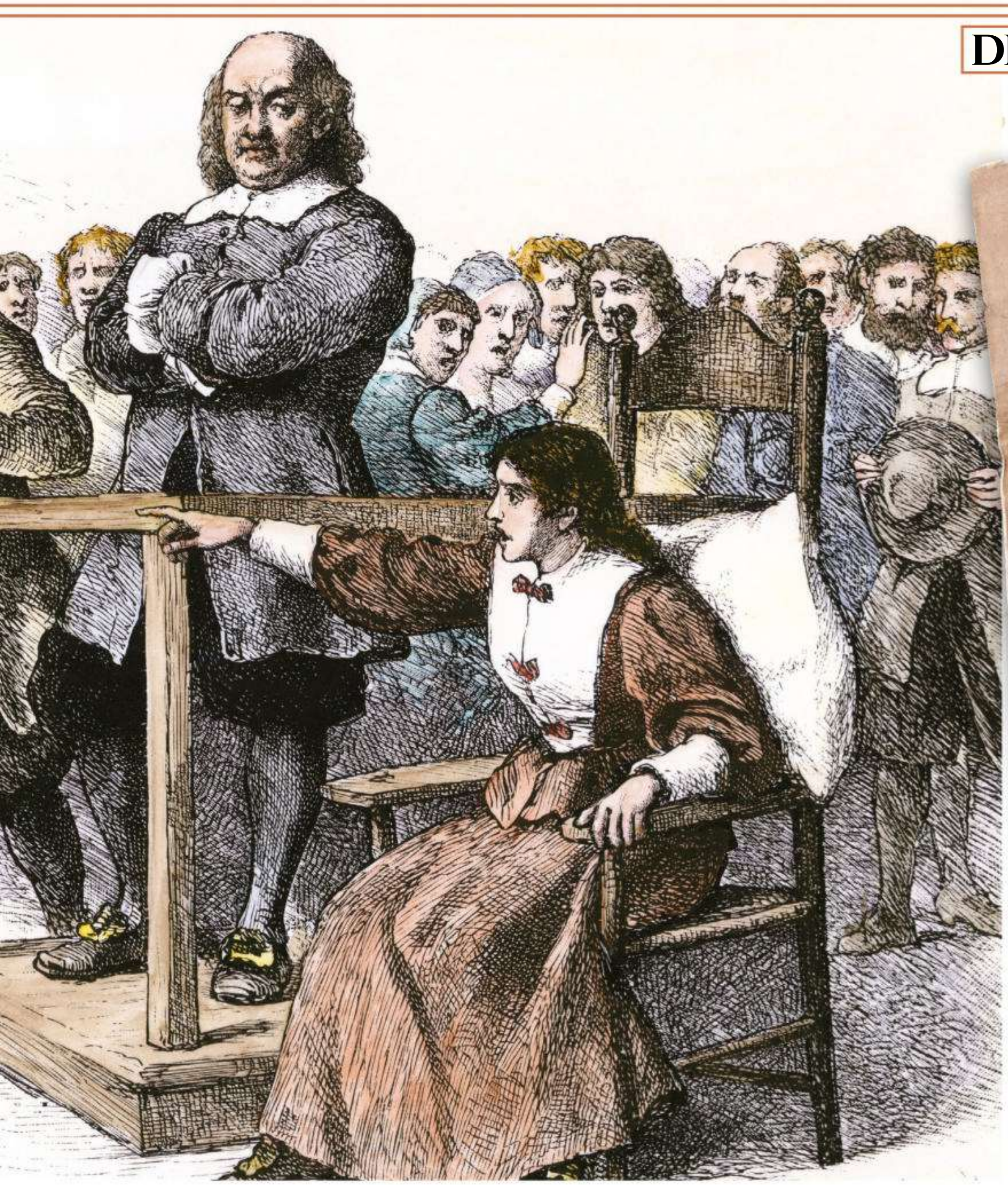


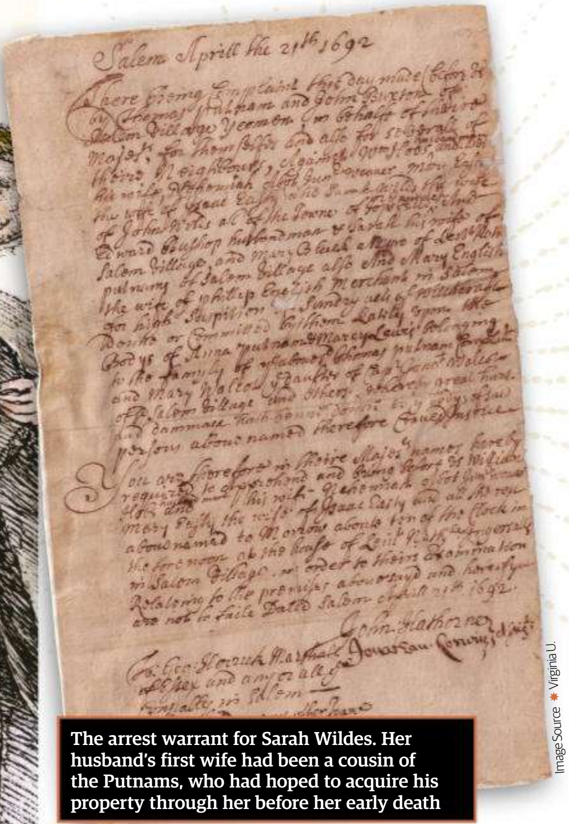
The 'afflicted' girls and women were key to the accusation, conviction and execution of the so-called Salem witches

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

Having links through either marriage or blood to a suspected witch made an individual more vulnerable to accusation themselves. Therefore when Martha Corey's husband Giles, Elizabeth Proctor's husband John, and the younger sister of Rebecca Nurse were accused in turn, this was not an altogether surprising development. On 4 April, formal complaints were made against John and Elizabeth Proctor and Sarah Cloyce, sister of Rebecca Nurse, their examinations taking place seven days later. Taking place in the meetinghouse in Salem Town, the two women were questioned by the deputy governor of the colony. In the now established pattern of proceedings, the afflicted suffered whenever the accused moved or spoke, with Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam predicting – inevitably correctly – the order that victims would suffer. The three accused were taken into custody, the next day transported to jail in Boston along with Martha Corey, Rebecca Nurse, and young Dorcas Good.

The threat was worsening; the witches were now growing in boldness, gathering together in public and working in concert in order to inflict yet further harm on their victims. Their gatherings, mimicking those of the village meetinghouse, were a direct attack on religion, the core of Puritan society itself.





Salem Aprill the 21th 1692

The arrest warrant for Sarah Wildes. Her husband's first wife had been a cousin of the Putnams, who had hoped to acquire his property through her before her early death

Image Source * Virginia U.

"The threat was worsening; the witches were now growing in boldness"

Amid the feverish atmosphere of fear and accusation, matters escalated yet further. When Giles Corey was examined on 19 April, the afflicted girls mimicked his movements, his motions seeming to cause whatever suffering they exhibited. This being seen as evidence of guilt, he was jailed to await trial.

Mary Warren, the afflicted maid of the Proctors', who was now suspected of witchcraft herself, likewise caused the afflicted to fall into fits, and was accused of forcing Betty Hubbard to sign the Devil's Ledger. In a twist to events, Mary herself began to show fresh signs of being tormented, apparently barely able to utter a word in between tortured pronouncements. When the magistrates could get nothing further from her, Mary was removed from the room.

The appearance of Bridget Bishop set off fresh sufferings. As further evidence against her it was related how her spectre had been stabbed, and there was proof: Bridget's clothing bore a hole just where the attack had taken place. Protestations to the contrary fell on deaf ears and were used against the accused. When Bridget shook her head to deny bewitching her first husband to death, the victims fell into fresh displays of torment, and Bridget was likewise imprisoned.

In later, private questioning, Mary Warren confessed she had touched the Devil's book on more than one occasion, out of fear, as the Proctors - her master and mistress - threatened her with dire consequences if she refused.

The examination of Abigail Hobbs that day was of particular importance, as she was the third person to admit her guilt and confess to the crimes she was accused of. A likely witch, her behaviour and irreverent speech and actions left no one doubting her guilt: Abigail confessed to having thrown in her lot with Satan, doing others ill at his bidding, and also admitted hurting Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam Jr as they had said.

The admissions of Abigail Hobbs marked a major shift in proceedings and the escalation of the already simmering hysteria. Although talk of the 'black man' who whispered in the ears of those accused had been present for some time, now, this evocative imagery came to the fore. In the confessions of Abigail Hobbs - a young woman who had experienced firsthand the terrors of Native American raids on the frontier - the link between the Devil, his instruments - the witches of Salem Village - and the very real physical threat of the Native American attacks on the frontier, was inextricably forged. The three were working together to bring down the good people of Salem Village, and this belief was reflected in the imagery of scalping, roasting and tearing apart that was used increasingly by the afflicted after this point.

On 21 April, Ann Putnam Junior related a vision that would likewise have far-reaching consequences. George Burroughs, a minister, had tortured her most violently, with the sole aim of convincing her to sign his book. Burroughs had also, said Ann, bewitched the troops of Sir Edmund Andros during the most recent conflict, thus aiding their Wabanaki enemies. The Devil was, Abigail Hobbs made clear, busy recruiting witches. His hunting ground? The Maine frontier.

Not all of those charged with witchcraft made it to trial: Sarah Osborne died in prison in Boston on 10 May, 1692

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

There had been ten formal accusations of witchcraft in Salem since matters started, over a course of seven weeks. Over the same length of time again, 54 people would find themselves now accused, five-and-a-half times as many.

Among them, George Burroughs became central to proceedings, his reputation providing great fuel for the fire of terrified speculation. Among other rumours circulating about this colourful individual, Burroughs was rumoured to have murdered two of his three wives. He also, fatally for him, had links to the girls who were now at the forefront of accusations: Ann Putnam Jr and Mercy Lewis. Not only did Mercy have firsthand knowledge of Burroughs from when both had lived in Maine, she had even, for a time, lived in his household. This was more than enough for her to have heard gossip about the controversial minister, information she likely shared with Ann Putnam. Burroughs became, in a short space of time, the leader of the witches, the epitome of evil and the dark forces that sought to bring down the good people of Salem.

As with any witch hunt worth the name, the accusations made in Salem Village were fuelled by rumours and whispers, each fresh accusation stirring the memories and experiences of their neighbours from many years previous. Unlikely to take the trouble to censor themselves in front of the suffering girls, such talk was a ready fount of information for Ann Putnam Junior, Abigail Williams, Mercy Lewis and the others to draw from, producing fresh accusations. In turn, this further confirmed what people had feared. In a time of such heightened sensitivity, any little sign could mean a formal accusation for witchcraft.

> "In a time of such heightened sensitivity, any little sign could mean an accusation"

A large number of people were accused together and arrested, forming a new pattern that further increased the snowballing of accusations and arrests. Among them, Deliverance Hobbs, accused of attacking Ann Putnam Jr and others, provided the alarming evidence that George Burroughs led the witches in a satanic communion. Mary Easty, another of Rebecca Nurse's sisters, Edward Bishop, and numerous others came before the magistrates as paranoia and hysteria mounted.

As May began, however, some of those accused began to fight back. In her examination, Susannah Martin attempted to turn the tables, pointing out that the apparently suffering victims were perhaps a little too knowledgeable about Satan's ways, suggesting that it was they, not those they accused, that were at fault. Perhaps in response to this show of ill-faith in the sufferers, this was also a time of great spectral activity, with repeated sightings of suspected witches and their satanic companions further fuelling the fire. Not only that, but now the afflicted girls found it impossible to move towards a suspect, yet another easy sign of guilt.

George Burroughs, the apparent leader of the Salem witches, was arrested early in May, but this did not stop his spectre from tormenting further victims. From prison, his form was reported on numerous occasions, as he continued in his quest to recruit witches to the cause of the Devil, his power so strong that even jail could not stop him.

The evidence given by the suffering young women, headed now by Mercy Lewis, was central to each case; Hathorne and Corwin utterly dependent upon what they revealed to make their cases against the supposed witches. This continuation of the reversal of societal roles and the willingness of both magistrates and villagers to endorse it provided fertile ground for further accusations and arrests.

Governor Phips arrived in Salem in mid-May to find the area was now suffocating in witches. The spectres of those already behind bars were abroad, tormenting the innocent with impunity, and fresh accusations and complaints were being made daily. With the supply of likely witches still abroad greatly depleted, attention turned to those who had links with the frontier, such as Philip English, arrested due to his suspicious Native American and French connections. English was one of the most prosperous of New England merchants, but his trade connections put him under suspicion due to the heightened awareness and belief in the connection between the tribes of the frontier and Satan. He was also suspected of having bewitched someone with whom he had a dispute over land the previous year, further evidence of how conflict and rumour led to accusations.

As May drew to a close, Phips had fixed upon a course of action. A Special Court of Oyer and Terminer was to be established in order to try the daily increasing number of suspected witches crowding the prisons. Meaning 'to hear and determine', this court marked a new approach to proceedings. The court, presided over by a number of judges, would be aided in its decisions by grand and petty juries to hear evidence and determine the guilt of the accused.

The first sitting was held on 2 June, with Bridget Bishop the first to be called. She, Elizabeth Proctor and Rebecca Nurse were physically examined, proof of their witchcraft discovered in the form of teats concealed on their bodies. Even more damningly, when examined again a few hours later, these incriminating marks were gone - proof, it was said, that the witches had suckled their familiar spirits. After the evidence was heard against her and the jury deliberated, Bridget was found guilty. Her sentence: death by hanging. On Friday 10 June, Bridget Bishop was hanged.

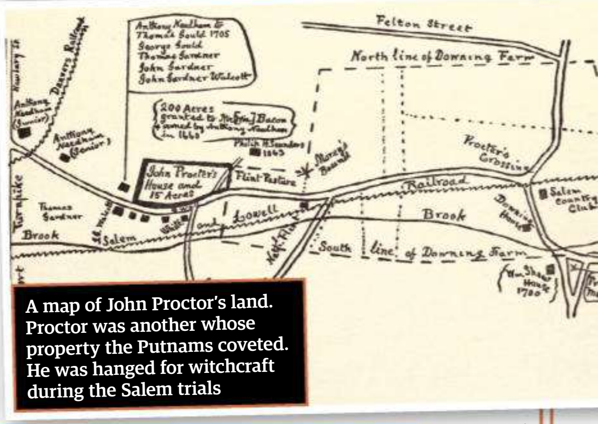
There was a brief period of respite then: for just shy of a fortnight, there were no fresh afflictions, little talk of spectral forms wreaking havoc on the bodies and souls of those who had suffered so greatly, with only three incidents recorded. The sacrifice of Bridget Bishop, perhaps, had been enough to bring the madness to an end.

During this period, some scepticism began to show regarding the accusations. In particular, efforts were made by the family of Rebecca Nurse in an attempt to clear her name. Despite a petition of 39 signatures vouching to her good character, Rebecca was still indicted. In the second sitting of the court on 28 June, Sarah Good and Susannah Martin were both convicted and sentenced to hang. Rebecca Nurse was acquitted, but further tragedy was to follow. The outcry at the verdict was so great that the jury was sent to reconsider, and Rebecca herself questioned on a remark she had made about Deliverance and Abigail Hobbs having "once been among them". Although she meant that they had been imprisoned along with Nurse and the others, and was not making an admission of witchcraft, Rebecca was duly convicted and condemned.

By the time the court adjourned in early July, the burgeoning hint of scepticism had waned once more, leaving the afflicted and those they accused open to an even greater surge in activity that would culminate, before the madness had run its course, in the hanging of a total of 19 people and the pressing to death of Giles Corey.

Image Source ✷ Creative Commons; RoastedGarlic2018.

The house of Judge Jonathan Corwin: 'The Witch House'. It is one of the few surviving buildings directly connected to the witch trials



A map of John Proctor's land. Proctor was another whose property the Putnams coveted. He was hanged for witchcraft during the Salem trials

Image Source ✷ William Phineas Upham (1836-1905).

FROM AFFLICTED TO ACCUSED

During the volatile and heightened period from March-June 1692, nothing was certain. Even being one of the afflicted did not guarantee protection; several individuals who began by accusing others of witchcraft all too soon found themselves in the same perilous position as those at whom they pointed the finger.

Deliverance Hobbs, stepmother to the accused and confessing Abigail, was both afflicted and named as a tormentor herself during the course of the trials. Deliverance claimed the spectre of Sarah Wilds almost tore her to pieces, while Mercy Lewis looked on. However, two men claimed to have seen Deliverance's spectre in the local tavern, and Ann Putnam, John Indian and Mary Walcott all accused Deliverance of attacking them. Confidence steadily eroded, Deliverance eventually confessed, among other things, to signing the Devil's book at the behest of Sarah Wilds. Meanwhile, the Proctors' maid, Mary Warren, claimed to be tormented by the spectre of Giles Corey. When threatened with beating by John Proctor, her fits stopped. Her request for prayers in thanksgiving was taken as a challenge to the veracity of the accusations of others, however, and she was in turn named as a witch by the rest of the afflicted girls.

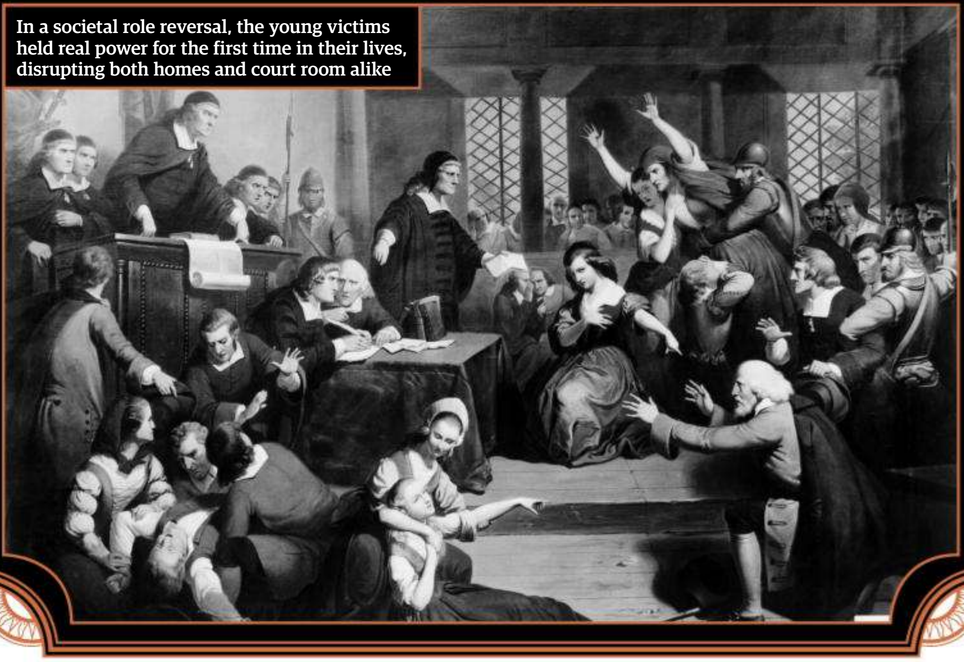

In a societal role reversal, the young victims held real power for the first time in their lives, disrupting both homes and court room alike

Image Source ✷ Getty Images.

The trial of George Burroughs

A war hero and preacher, George Burroughs seemed like an unlikely target for a witch hunt. But that didn't stop the people of Salem Village…

Written by Poppy-Jay Palmer

The Salem witch trials of 1692 tended to target outcasts, people of low social standing and those who couldn't defend themselves, but those weren't the only groups that were being accused. As the chaos progressed, well-respected members of Massachusetts society were also being put on trial. Among them was Reverend George Burroughs, a charismatic and well-liked war hero who became the only minister to be executed.

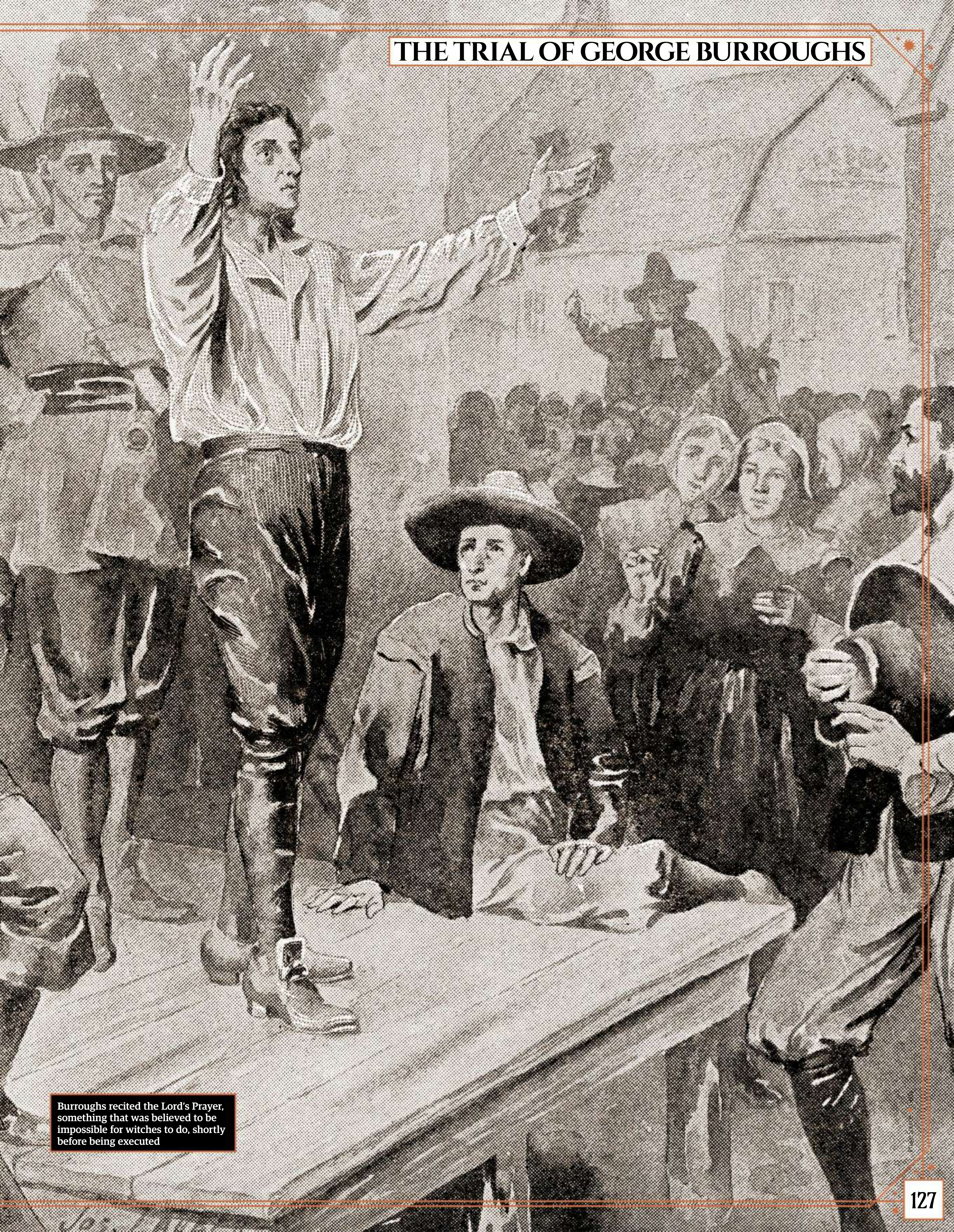
It is still unclear whether Burroughs was born in Suffolk, England, or in the Massachusetts seaside town of Scituate, but he was raised by his mother and settled in Roxbury at a young age. Intelligent, driven and dedicated to the Protestant church, he attended Harvard College to train as an American Congregational pastor, graduated with distinguished honours in 1670, and took up the post of the minister of Falmouth (now known as Portland, Maine).

> During his time as Salem's minister, Burroughs had been forced to borrow money from the infamous Thomas Putnam

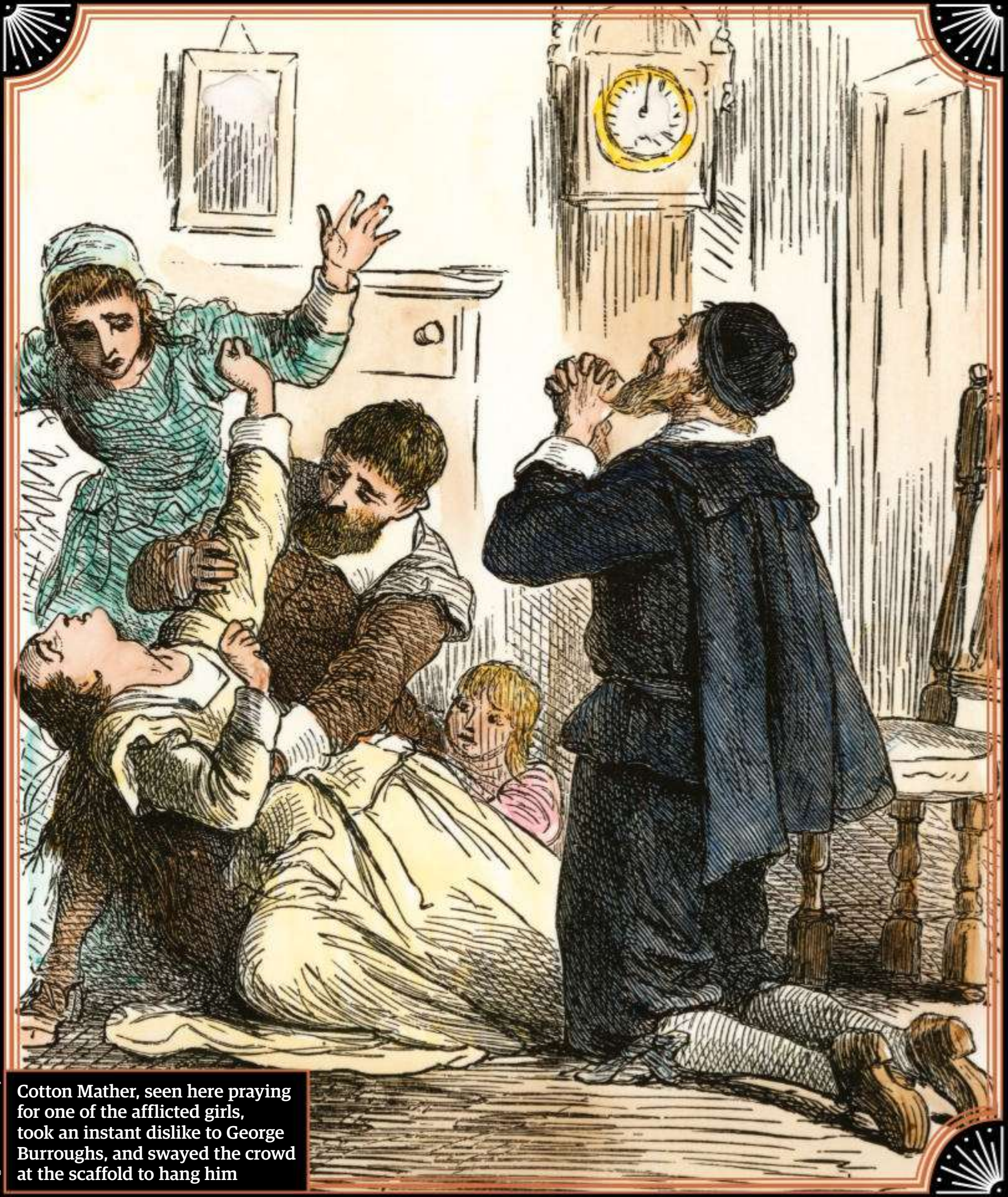
Ten years later, Burroughs became the minister of Salem Village and found himself to be a prominent figure in the controversy around politics, religion and money in the area. Before he arrived in Salem, three other ministers had had problems with the town and left in quick succession, and it wasn't long before Burroughs was swept up in the same social conflicts. Following a dispute with his parishioners over his pay in 1683, the Salem Village Committee suddenly stopping paying his salary. A lengthy battle, which saw him arrested for debt and bailed out by members of the congregation, ended with Burroughs finally deciding to leave Salem. But that wouldn't be the last he would see of the village.

After his departure from Salem, Burroughs continued to move around for some years. He had journeyed back to Falmouth and returned to his previous job as the town's minister by the time the infamous King William's War broke out. When

Image Source * Getty Images



Burroughs recited the Lord's Prayer, something that was believed to be impossible for witches to do, shortly before being executed



Cotton Mather, seen here praying for one of the afflicted girls, took an instant dislike to George Burroughs, and swayed the crowd at the scaffold to hang him

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

had lived in Falmouth before, the town had fallen victim to an Native American attack in 1676, during King Philip's War, and he had been forced to leave. His exit from Falmouth was much the same the second time around: 1690 saw in the next conflict, King William's War, which brought many defeats to Massachusetts, and Burroughs was forced to flee yet again when Falmouth was destroyed by the Wabanaki Confederacy. Looking to start a new life, he joined a group of other refugees in heading to the coastal town of Wells, Maine, which he thought would be far safer from attack.

It wasn't until 1692 that Burroughs finally returned to Salem Village, but it was under very different circumstances. On 30 April, Burroughs was accused of witchcraft by Salem resident Ann Putnam, and at the start of May was forcibly taken from his home in Wells – while eating dinner with his family, according to family legend – and put in Salem's jail. He was charged with "high suspicion of sundry acts of witchcraft done or committed by then upon the bodies of Mary Walcott, Mercy Lewis, Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, Elizabeth Hubbard and Susan Sheldon". He was examined and interrogated by magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne.

Burroughs was one of more than 200 people accused of witchcraft over the course of the Salem witch trials, but he was the only minister to be executed. Like most of the other people accused, the evidence that suggested he was a witch was flimsy and rather nonsensical. One of the biggest cases against him was his supposedly extraordinary strength. People claimed to have seen him lift a musket by inserting one finger into the barrel, a feat that they presumed to be impossible without assistance from a diabolical power. In actual fact, his strength may well have been a product of his time in the war, when he had become used to hard manual labour and carrying heavy loads.

Word also spread that Burroughs had managed to survive several brutal attacks by the Native Americans during King William's War, when nearly all the other defenders at the fort he was stationed at were murdered. The people of Salem grew suspicious, and wondered whether he had survived using witchcraft. Had Burroughs bewitched his soldiers to cause a military disaster? He may have been a war hero, but discourse such as this did not work in Burroughs' favour.

The fact that Burroughs had been married three times – and widowed twice – also didn't help matters. He met his first wife, Hannah Fisher, on the completion of his education. When Burroughs became the minister of the Salem Village church in 1680, they moved into the home of John and Rebecca Putnam. Hannah died during childbirth the following year, leaving Burroughs with a newborn and two other children, and Burroughs had to borrow money from the Putnams in order to pay for her funeral. He married his second wife Sarah Ruck Hathorne – a relative of the magistrate John Hathorne – soon after, and Burroughs gained four more children. Sarah died shortly before Burroughs moved his family to Maine, most likely also during childbirth, and the minister married for a third time to a woman named Mary, with whom he had a daughter.

"The evidence that suggested he was a witch was flimsy and rather nonsensical"

On 5 August, Burroughs was finally indicted by a grand jury. At his trial, it came out that he had treated both of his late wives badly in the past: Burroughs' allegedly forbid them from speaking about him to others, and censored letters they would write to their families. On top of that, the afflicted also claimed they had seen spectres of Burroughs' late wives, which led his accusers to believe he had murdered them. There was no evidence to back up the theory, but the hysteria surrounding the trials meant that evidence wasn't always necessary.

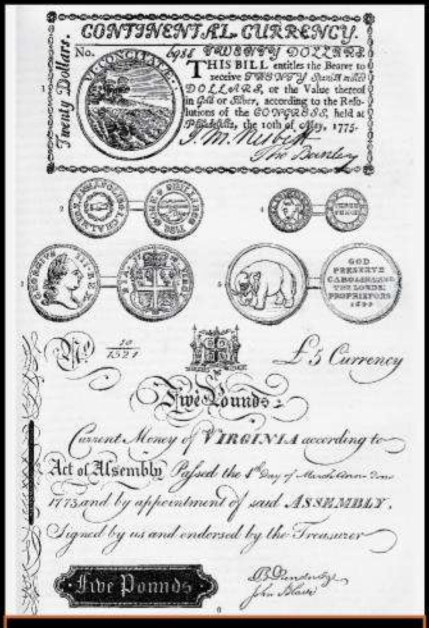
During the trial, Elizabeth Hubbard, Mercy Lewis, Susannah Sheldon, Mary Walcott and Ann Putman all testified against Burroughs and claimed that he had forced them to sign his book, which Hubbard said was written in words "as red as blood". Abigail Hobbs and Mary Warren, who

STRIFE AFTER DEATH

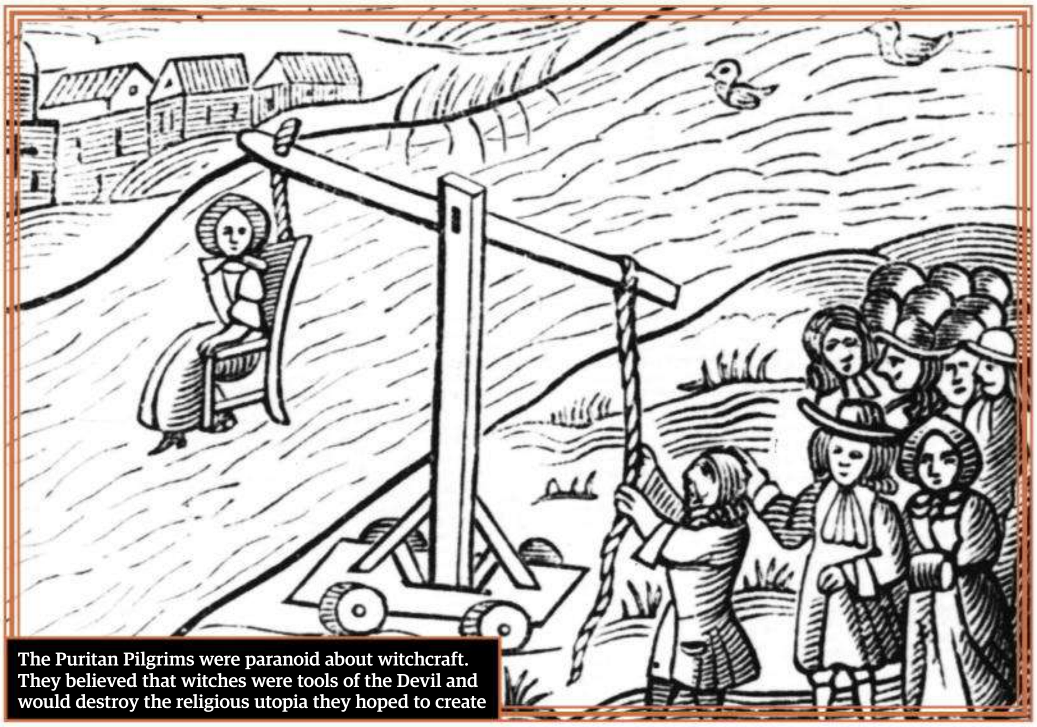
When the Massachusetts government finally admitted that the Salem witch trials should never have happened, it awarded compensation to the surviving members of the victims' families in 1711, and £50 went to George Burroughs' third wife Mary and her children. However, the payout ended up causing more trouble than it was worth.

As Mary and her children had previously received most of Burroughs' estate after his death, some of the surviving children from his previous marriages, including Rebecca Fowle, Jeremiah Burroughs, Charles Burroughs and Hannah Fox, filed a petition with the court in 1712 in order to get their share of the compensation.

The court ruled that £6 of the £50 would be divided equally between Burroughs' six children, but it wasn't long before the siblings took matter into their own hands and began squabbling over the money. Filing even more letters to the court, several of the siblings demanded that they be given portions of each other's shares for various ridiculous reasons. After a while, they started requesting additional money to be sent to other family members, explaining that they only received £4 each, which they said was a "poor recompense". It is still unclear from the records whether any of George Burroughs' children were awarded any additional money.



Compensation following the wrongful deaths of the victims of the Salem witch trials was pitiful, and several family members requested more



The Puritan Pilgrims were paranoid about witchcraft. They believed that witches were tools of the Devil and would destroy the religious utopia they hoped to create

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

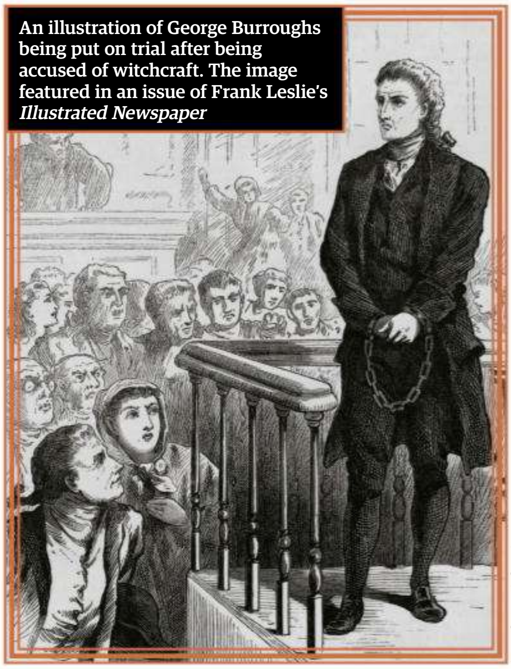
had also been accused of witchcraft, charged Burroughs with bringing them into the world of Satan through holding devilish meetings in Salem. Suddenly, Burroughs was seen as the ringleader of the witches. It is believed by many that he was used as a scapegoat during the Salem witch trials; putting the blame on him meant that the witchcraft problem was suddenly associated with the interloper Burroughs rather than with Salem Village's community.

After a harrowing trial, throughout which Burroughs maintained his innocence, the accused was found guilty. A petition against the outcome of the trial was signed by 35 Salem Village citizens, but Burroughs was still sentenced to death.

Burroughs was finally executed at Proctor's Ledge near Gallows Hill on 19 August 1692. The execution drew a large crowd, but it is most notable for being the only one during the Salem witch trials to be witnessed by Reverend Cotton Mather, a Boston minister. Mather supposedly took an immediate dislike to Burroughs purely because of the latter's unorthodox religious practices and his role as a religious dissident, so much so that Mather bought into the spectral wives account during the trial, despite the fact that he was well known for his writings on the unreliability of spectral evidence at the time.

Right before his death, Burroughs calmly recited the Lord's Prayer as he stood on the ladder. His actions moved much of the crowd to tears: it was widely believed that witches simply couldn't deliver the Lord's Prayer, and so people began to doubt his guilt. Mather, who was watching the proceedings from horseback, feared the onlookers would attempt to stop the execution, and took it upon himself to remind them why they were there. He said: "The Devil has often been transformed into an Angel of Light". The crowd steeled itself, and Burroughs was hanged and later buried under the gallows. Four more people were executed at Proctor's Ledge that day.

Though many of the people of Salem thought Burroughs to be a witch, a respectable number opposed his execution. If a Puritan minister could be accused and hanged for witchcraft then no one was safe. The government of the Massachusetts Colony eventually publicly recognised Burroughs' innocence and admitted he had been wrongfully executed, and his widow and children were awarded compensation for the 'inconvenience'. Many people believe that it was George Burroughs' death that finally helped to bring about the end of the hellish trials.



An illustration of George Burroughs being put on trial after being accused of witchcraft. The image featured in an issue of Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

Spectral evidence

The Salem court admitted a form of evidence that was impossible to prove or disprove, and could not be argued against by the accused

Written by April Madden

When we use the term 'witch hunt' to describe a targeted attack on a particular person or group, a dogged pursuit in the court of public opinion with little recourse to impartial justice, it's the concept of spectral evidence that's at the back of our minds. This unique form of 'proof' would be ridiculous if it wasn't terrifying, because the theory of spectral evidence states that the spirit or spectre, or even a dream, of the accused, can afflict a victim. Entirely founded on personal perception, allegations based on spectral evidence were impossible to defend against. It didn't matter if the accused was visibly, physically bound in front of a court full of witnesses, as happened more than once during the Salem witch trials – if the victim claimed that a vision of the accused was simultaneously speaking to, touching or assaulting them at that very moment, then it was true.

We still don't know whether the Salem accusers were genuinely experiencing hallucinations or if they were making them up

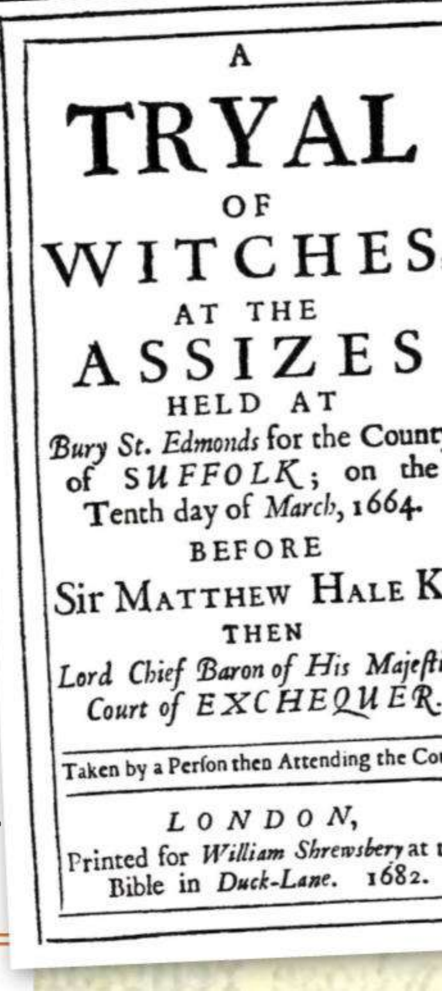
The people of Salem got the idea of spectral evidence from a witch trial held 30 years before, in the English town of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Bury St Edmunds had been plagued by witchcraft accusations for decades, and in one particular instance a pamphlet had been produced detailing the process and outcome of the court case. The 60-page booklet, *A Tryal of Witches*, got off to a bad start by misprinting the year in which the case was tried. Nonetheless, it proved hugely inspirational to the Salem judges, as it set a precedent for their use of spectral evidence, which became the chief form of evidence used in the Salem witch trials.

Spectral evidence was believed to only be visible or palpable to the victim, and chiefly consisted of the spirit of the accused pinching, biting or beating their accuser – Salem's Martha Corey was accused of spectrally hitting the Putnam family's maid, Mercy Lewis, with an invisible iron rod. At the same time as Ann Putnam said this was happening, Goodwife Corey was physically standing in the Putnam household, talking to its master, Thomas. She was convicted and sentenced to hang.

Despite their undeniable culpability in many of the Salem executions, father and son clergymen Increase and Cotton Mather, whose hysterical and ill-thought-out tracts on the supernatural stirred up much of the Salem witch panic, both argued that spectral evidence alone was not enough for a solid conviction. The Salem court finally ruled that it was inadmissible as evidence, but that was too late for the 20 'witches' who were already dead.

Main Image Source ✱ Oliver, Edmund (1827-1886).

The precedent for spectral evidence was set at an English witch trial in Suffolk in 1662 (the date on this pamphlet is a 17th-century misprint)

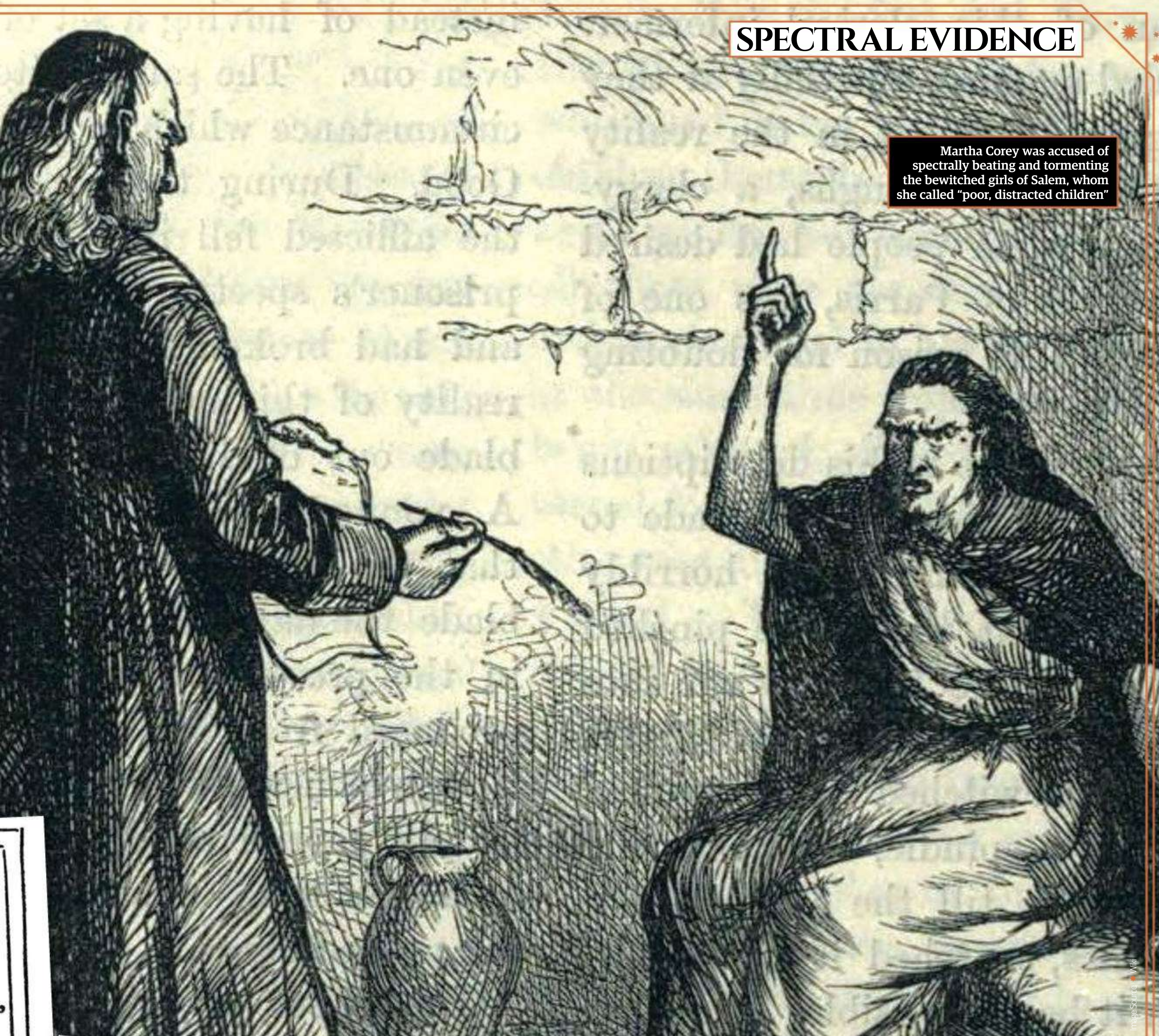


A
TRYAL
OF
WITCHES
AT THE
ASSIZES
HELD AT
Bury St. Edmonds for the Count
of SUFFOLK; on the
Tenth day of March, 1664.
BEFORE
Sir MATTHEW HALE K
THEN
Lord Chief Baron of His Majeſt
Court of EXCHEQUER.

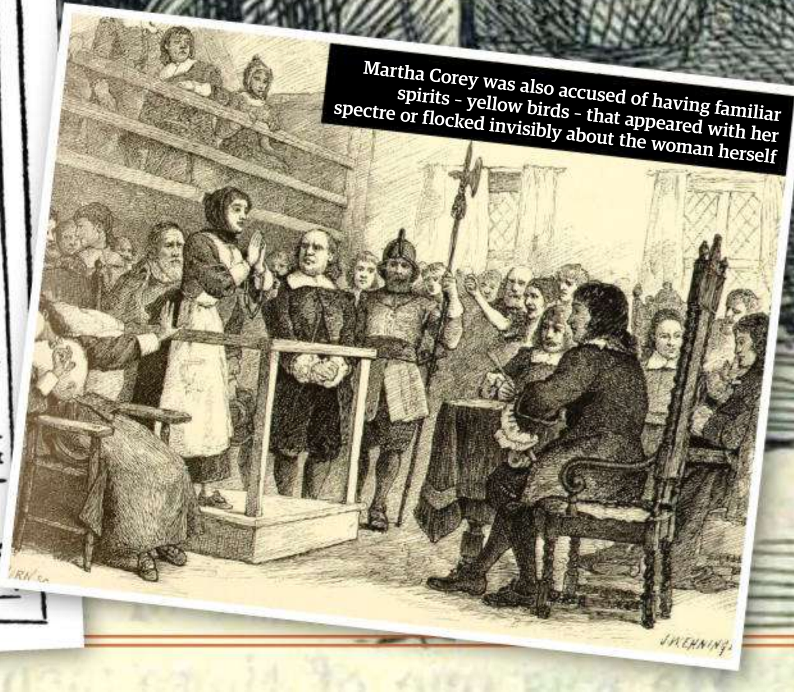
Taken by a Perſon then Attending the Co

LONDON,
Printed for William Shrewsbery at t
Bible in Duck-Lane. 1682.

Image Source ✱ Edmund Patrick.



Martha Corey was accused of spectrally beating and tormenting the bewitched girls of Salem, whom she called "poor, distracted children"



Martha Corey was also accused of having familiar spirits - yellow birds - that appeared with her spectre or flocked invisibly about the woman herself

Image Source: Wiki

Courts and punishments

With an accusation of practicing witchcraft came a long and harrowing process of determining guilt, and cruel and unusual punishments...

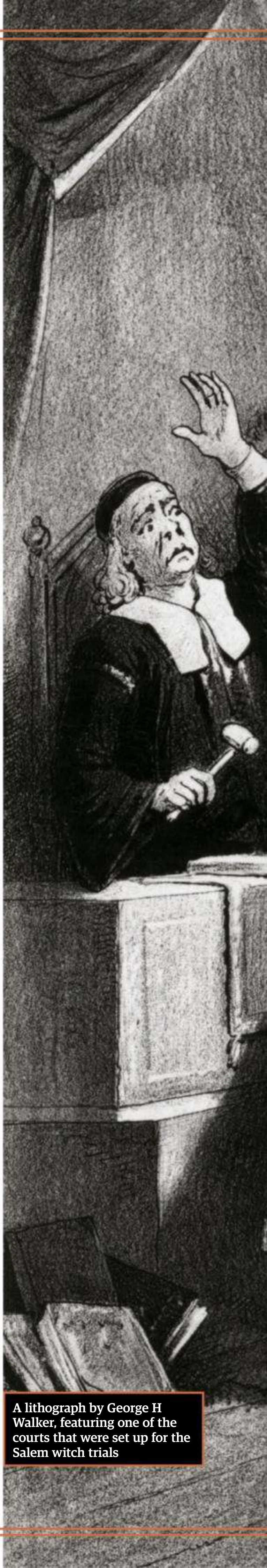
Written by Poppy-Jay Palmer

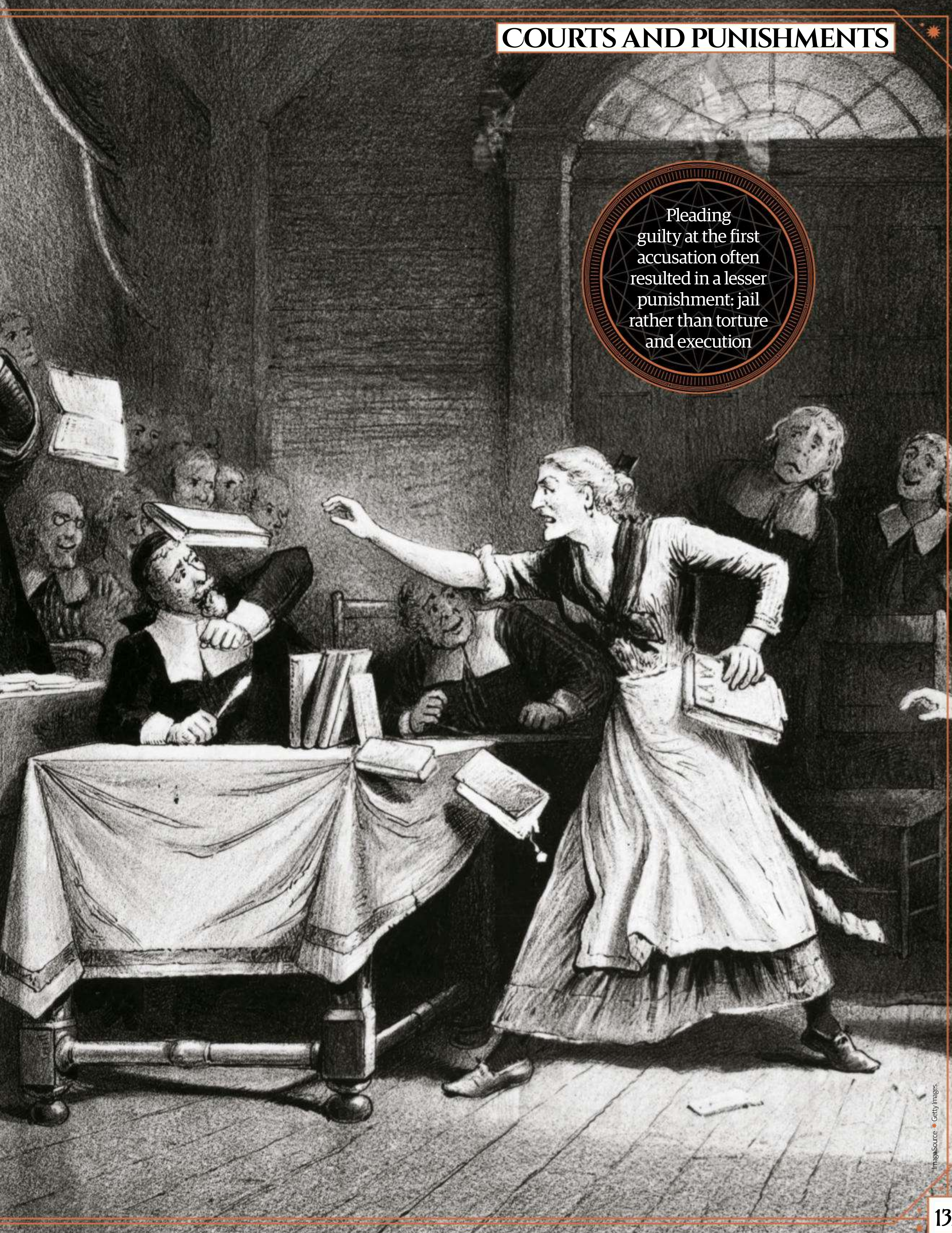
Despite the fact that the Salem witch trials are now viewed as entirely unnecessary and somewhat ridiculous, there was actually a proper legal process in place at the time, and for every accusation it was followed to the letter. Upon being accused of witchcraft, the majority of people pled guilty: pleading guilty often meant that they would merely end up in jail, but pleading innocent would subject them to a whole other world of torturous witch-finding methods.

The legal procedure associated with the Salem witch trials was an imperfect, drawn-out process. First, someone would file an official complaint to the court if they suspected someone else to be a witch. Next, if the accusation was deemed to be valid, a magistrate would issue a warrant for the arrest of the accused, who would then be taken into custody for a thorough public examination (practically an interrogation, during which the accused would be pressed to confess) if they insisted they were innocent. After the examination, if two or more magistrates believed that the accused was probably guilty, they were sent to jail to await a trial, and possibly be re-examined. The Grand Jury would then be presented with the case, where a testimony would be made and evidence would be submitted. If the Grand Jury indicted the accused, the accused was tried before the Court of Oyer and Terminer, where a jury would decide if they were innocent or guilty. If they were found guilty, the Court would finally pronounce the death sentence and a specified date, and the Sheriff and his deputies were to carry it out. The Salem witch trials may have been barbaric, but there is no denying that they were organised.

In addition to interrogations, 'examinations' played a big part in the trials. The first section of the examination involved the accusers, who would go before the magistrates and demonstrate the effect the witches were having on them or had had on them in the past. Spectral evidence was popular throughout the trials, with many accusers recounting dreams and visions they had had and presenting them as proof against the accused. The spectres themselves didn't necessarily have to take the shape of the accused; they were also known to manifest as animals, like dogs, wolves and black cats. As dreams and visions weren't much to go on when it came to piecing together the truth, the court decided to moderate the use of spectral evidence by referencing Gilbert Geis and Ivan Bunn's *A Tryal Of Witches*, a 60-page report of the Bury St Edmunds witch trials that occurred in Suffolk, England between 1599 and 1694. The Salem court discovered that influential English barrister Sir Matthew Hale had allowed spectral evidence, so they decided that they would too.

The group of 'afflicted' girls that started the accusations famously used spectral evidence to back up their stories, as did a number of other accusers, and most lapped it up. Even Boston


A lithograph by George H Walker, featuring one of the courts that were set up for the Salem witch trials



Pleading guilty at the first accusation often resulted in a lesser punishment: jail rather than torture and execution

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

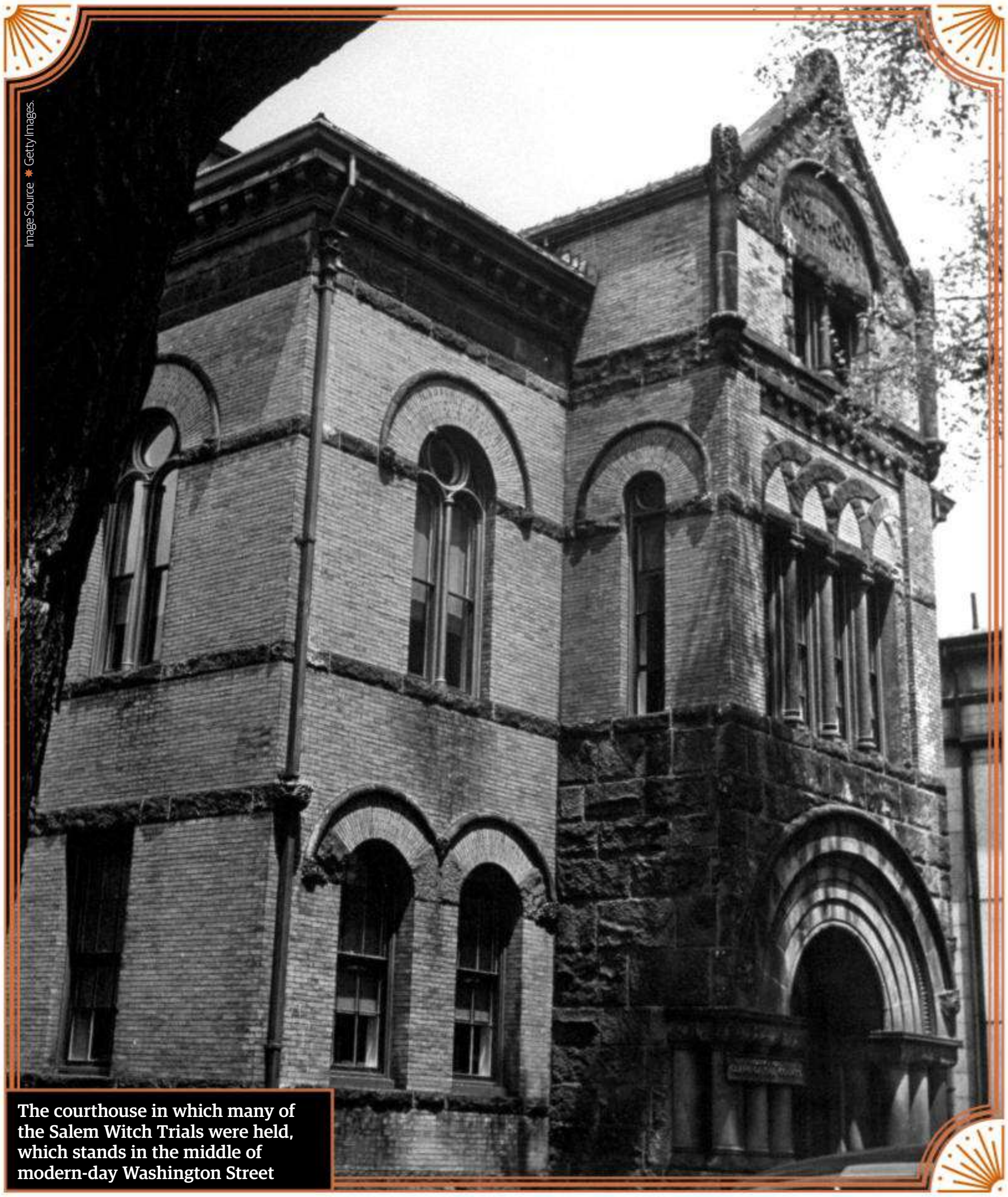


Image Source ✷ Getty Images.

The courthouse in which many of the Salem Witch Trials were held, which stands in the middle of modern-day Washington Street

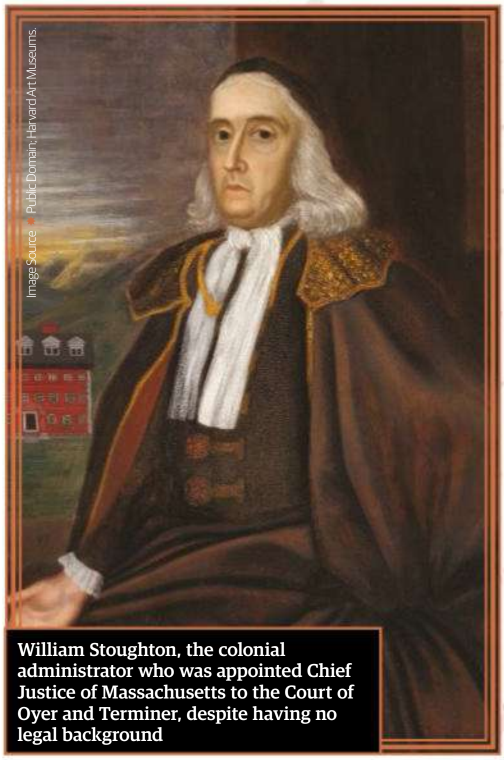


Image Source ✷ Public Domain: Harvard Art Museums.

William Stoughton, the colonial administrator who was appointed Chief Justice of Massachusetts to the Court of Oyer and Terminer, despite having no legal background

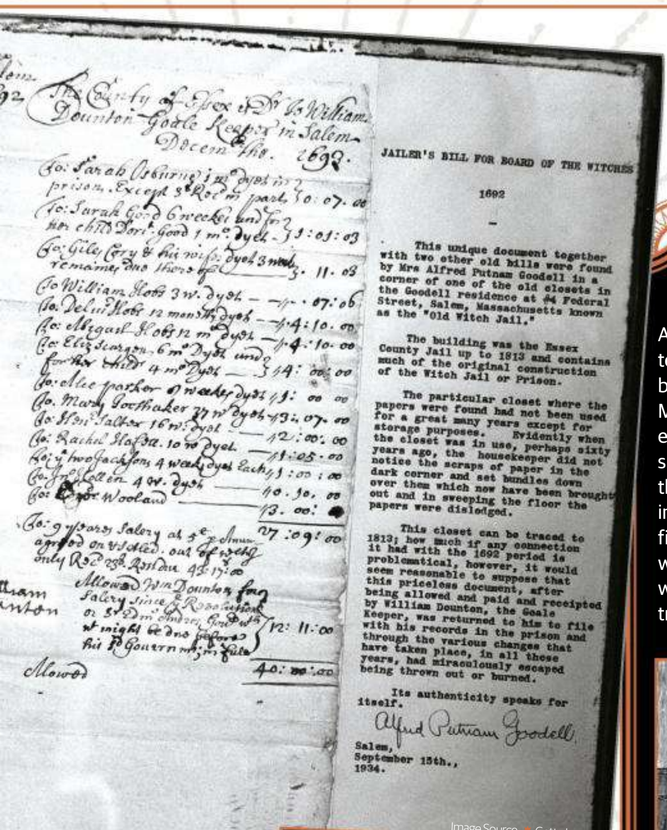
> "Cotton Mather's support of spectral evidence may well have been more about his personal vendetta against George Burroughs"

minister Cotton Mather supported the validity of the spectral evidence presented during the Salem witch trials, despite the fact that he was at the time very well known for his writings on why spectral evidence was unreliable. However, his support of the concept at the trials may well have been more about his personal vendetta against accused Puritan minister George Burroughs than his faith in the evidence. For people that weren't Burroughs, Mather insisted that convictions should not be based on spectral evidence alone, as the Devil can take the shape of an innocent person.

Following an account from the accusers, magistrates would then examine the accused. The magistrates looked for what was known as a 'witch mark' upon the accused's body to use as evidence. As with spectral evidence, the court looked to the practices used in England for inspiration. It was a common belief that a witch possessed a 'witch teat' or extra nipple on which they permitted a familiar or imp to suckle blood. Most Puritans were convinced that these teats could be disguised as anything – moles, warts, birthmarks, skin discolouration, swelling, red spots, bumps hidden under the tongue and in private parts – and were extremely thorough in their searches, hiring doctors and midwives to strip the accused of their clothing to carry them out. Even people that hadn't been accused of witchcraft started cutting off bodily peculiarities themselves, fearing that they would be examined too if anyone were to spot them, but the scars that were left were just as peculiar and suspicious.

It was also believed that witches would not bleed or feel pain if the marks were pricked, and so doctors would poke them with a pin or a needle to see what would happen. If it didn't bleed, it was a bona fide witch mark. Following the end of the trials, it was discovered that dull or blunt instruments had been used in some cases to produce false results and support the accusations.

In addition to the search for a witch mark, the accused would also be subjected to a number of other tests. One involved reciting the Lord's Prayer: Puritans believed that the Devil would not allow his subjects to speak the Lord's words, so if the accused was unable to recite the prayer, or made a mistake while doing so, then they were probably a witch. Another, known as the 'swimming' test, involved tying the accused's finger to their opposite toe and lowering them into water. If they sank (and, in some cases, died), they were innocent. If they floated they were probably guilty. Similar to the swimming test was the 'ducking stool': the accused would be tied to a chair and dunked in water, with sinking indicating they were innocent and floating indicting they were a user of witchcraft. These



JAILER'S BILL FOR BOARD OF THE WITCHES

1692

-

This unique document together with two other old bills were found by Mrs Alfred Putnam Goodell in a corner of one of the old closets in the Goodell residence at 44 Federal Street, Salem, Massachusetts known as the "Old Witch Jail."

The building was the Essex County Jail up to 1813 and contains much of the original construction of the Witch Jail or Prison.

The particular closet where the papers were found had not been used for a great many years except for storage purposes. Evidently when the closet was in use, perhaps sixty years ago, the housekeeper did not notice the scraps of paper in the dark corner and set bundles down over them which now have been brought out and in sweeping the floor the papers were dislodged.

This closet can be traced to 1813; how much if any connection it had with the 1692 period is problematical, however, it would seem reasonable to suppose that this priceless document, after being allowed and paid and receipted by William Dounton, the Goale Keeper, was returned to him to file with his records in the prison and through the various changes that have taken place, in all these years, had miraculously escaped being thrown out or burned.

Its authenticity speaks for itself.

Alfred Putnam Goodell

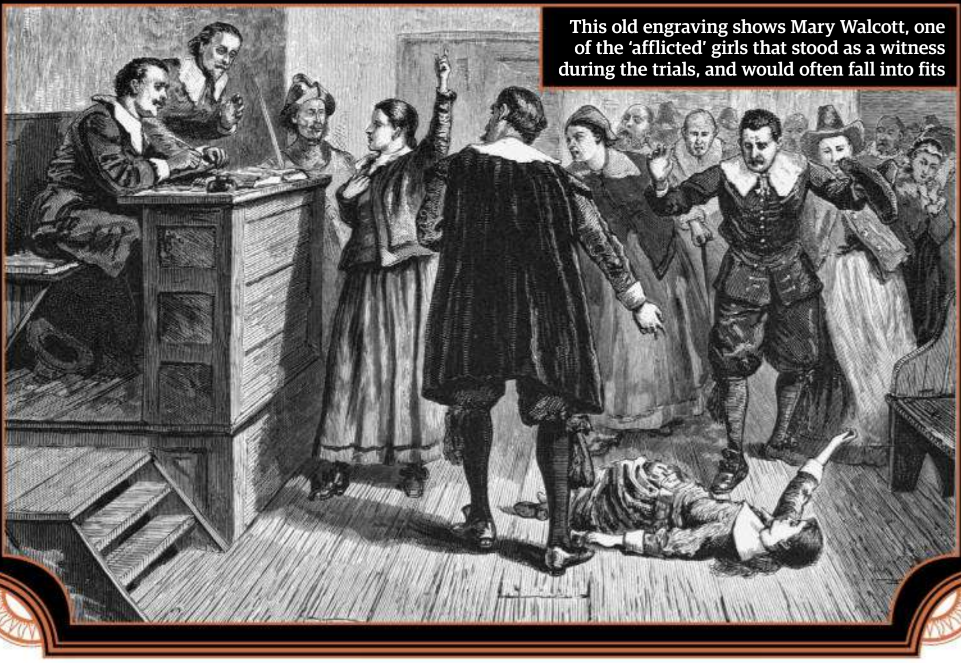
Salem,
September 15th.,
1934.

Image Source ✱ Getty Images.

A jailer's bill carrying the details of the people accused of practicing witchcraft that were housed at the Essex County Jail during the trials

A WITCH'S TOUCH

As far as unreliable forms of evidence went, touch tests were perhaps the most dubious, and were believe to have been used exclusively in Andover, Massachusetts, during the Salem witch trials. The exercise was based on the idea that witches held a special connection to those they had bewitched. When those 'afflicted' fell into violent fits, the accused was instructed to touch them. If they were innocent the fits would continue, yet if they were a witch the fits would immediately stop and the victim would become well. Touch tests were used before the Salem witch trials, and, like spectral evidence, played a big part in the trial of Rose Cullender and Amy Denny during the Bury St Edmunds witch trials in 1662, from which the Salem judges took their legal precedents. The pair of young girls they were believed to have bewitched often fell into dramatic fits, and their fists clenched so tightly that even a strong man couldn't pull their fingers apart. However, their hands fell open when touched by Cullender and Denny. To test the theory, the court had some of its members touch the girls while they were blindfolded. The fact that their hands fell open suggested that they may have been faking, but the women were still found guilty and hanged.



This old engraving shows Mary Walcott, one of the 'afflicted' girls that stood as a witness during the trials, and would often fall into fits

Image Source ✱ Public Domain; Unattributed.

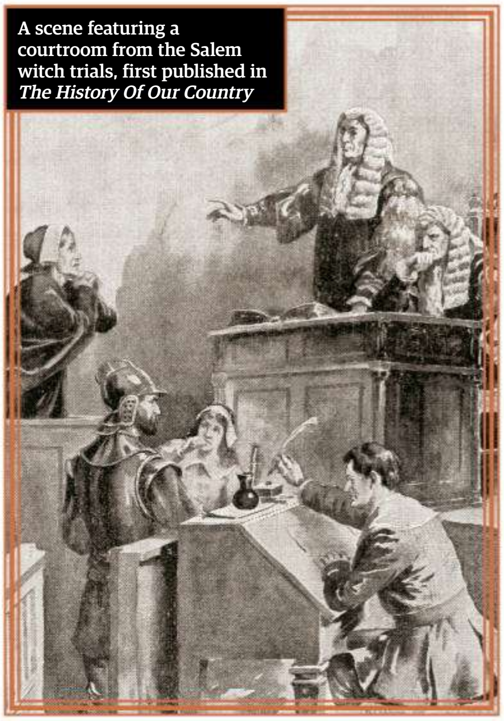
systems operated under the logic that when a witch signed themselves to the Devil they also renounced their baptism and therefore water, an agent of baptism, would refuse to accept them.

Confessions from known witches (or those that confessed during their own trial) identifying other witches were also used as evidence, and the accused's houses were regularly searched. The discovery of items like books on palmistry and horoscopes, mysterious pots of ointments and small figures of humans known as poppets all pointed to the accused being a witch.

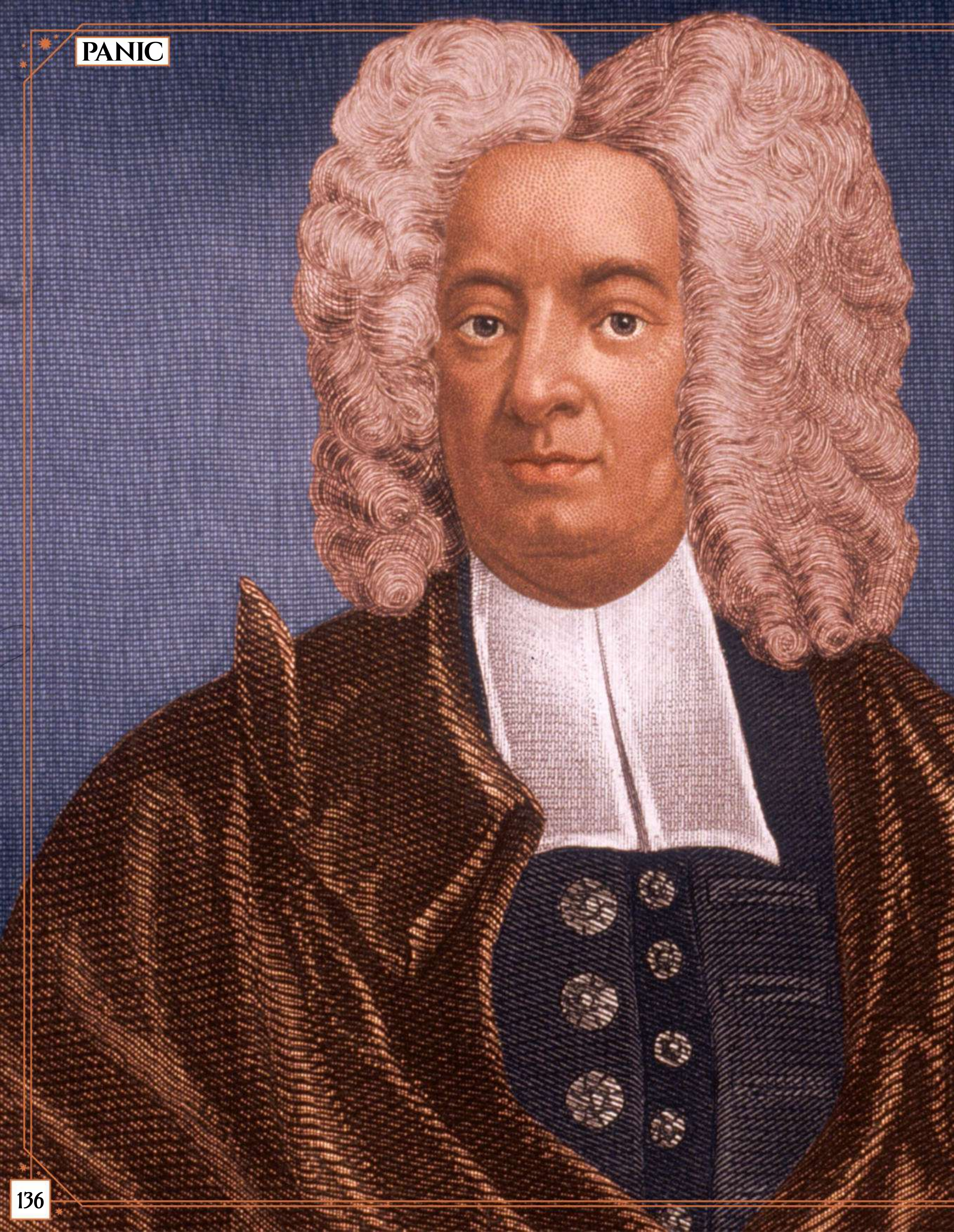
Following the tests and interrogations, if the accused was indicted they were given a trial. A special Court of Oyer and Terminer (from the Anglo-French phrase 'oyer et terminer', meaning 'to hear and determine') was set up specifically for the Salem witch trials: with dozens of accused witches filling the jails and threatening to overwhelm local courthouses, officials were eager to start the proceedings. The court convened in Salem Village on 2 June 1692, with lieutenant governor William Stoughton – who at the time had absolutely no prior legal experience – as its chief magistrate and Thomas Newton serving as the Crown's Prosecuting Attorney.

The first person brought before the grand jury was Bridget Bishop. She had been accused of bewitching five girls – Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam Jr, Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott and Elizabeth Hubbard – following a series of unusual events involving a figure of Bishop pinching, biting and choking the girls, among other things. She was found guilty by the Court, and hanged on 10 June, becoming the first person to be executed during the Salem witch trials.

In total, around 20 people were executed as a result of the trials, and several more died in prison. Although continental European trials are famous for burning witches at the stake, this was actually a very uncommon punishment in the New World. After being found guilty, most of the accused were sentenced to hanging. Some, however, fell victim to what was known as the 'witch's cradle': the accused was stuffed into a sack and tied upside-down from a tree before being swung back and forth by their accusers. The practice often caused hallucinations. One man was even killed before it was determined whether or not he was a witch. 81-year-old Giles Corey refused to utter a sound when asked how he wished to plead, so his interrogation consisted of the magistrates requesting he lay down on the ground, then spending a number of days placing more and more heavy rocks on his body, occasionally feeding him morsels of bread, until he was eventually crushed to death.



A scene featuring a courtroom from the Salem witch trials, first published in *The History Of Our Country*



Cotton Mather recorded, supported, and publicised the Salem trials, as he did other cases of bewitchment

Image Source * Getty Images

Meet the Mathers

In New England one family came to have huge moral influence – how the Mathers used it shaped the Salem witch trials

Written by Ben Gazur

In August 1635 a powerful hurricane smashed into the eastern coast of North America. Thousands of trees were ripped up and houses smashed. On the ocean, several ships sank and others suffered enormous damage. The James had its sails ripped to shreds by the gales and was nearly carried onto sharp rocks.

Yet on board there was a family who put much stock in the powers of prayer, and one of their descendants described the James' survival in providential terms. "God turned the wind about, which carried them from the rock of death before their eyes". Among the passengers on this ship were the Mathers. They were to have a huge impact on life in the British colonies for generations, and played a starring role in the Salem witch trials.

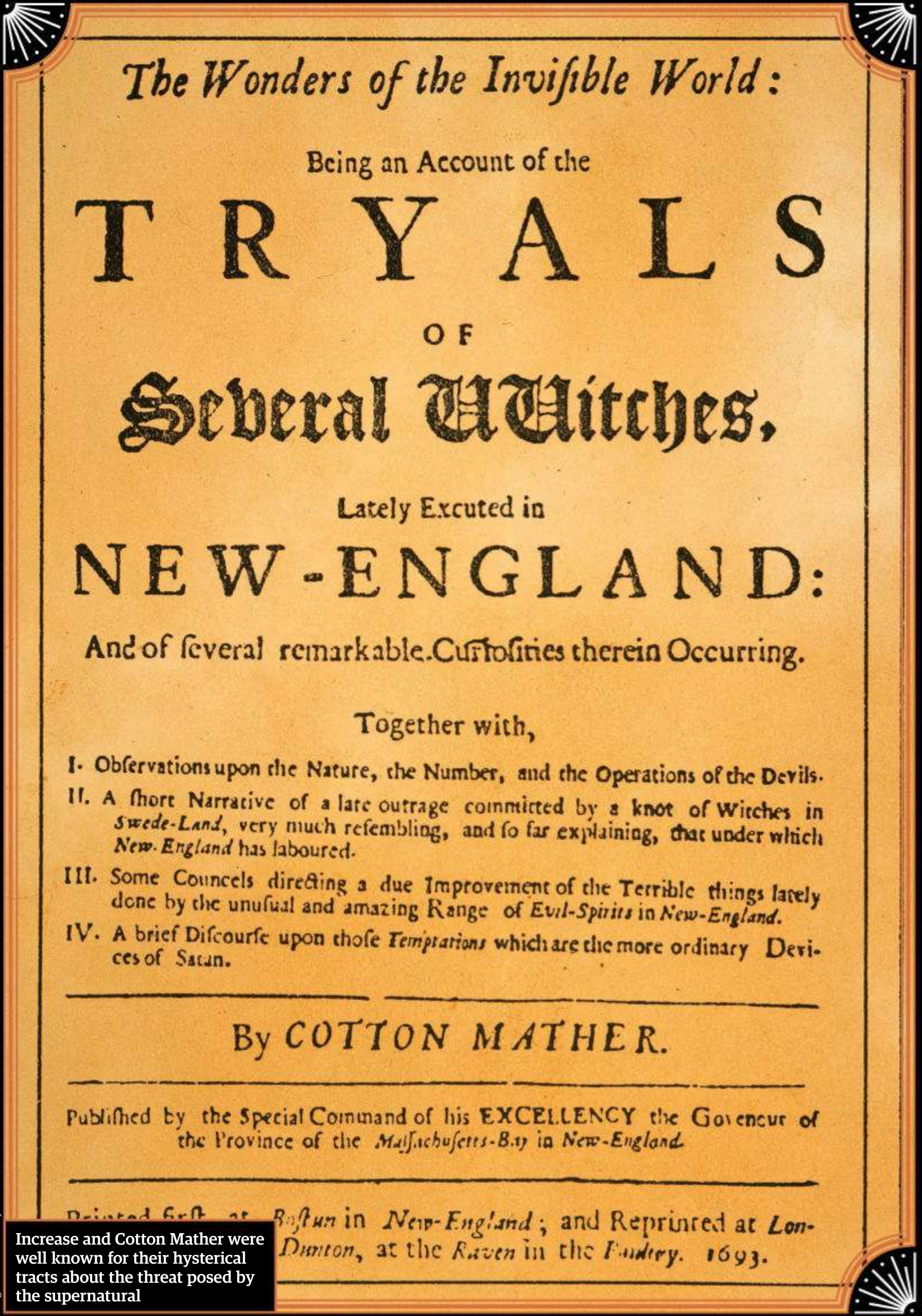
RICHARD AND INCREASE MATHER

Richard Mather was a noted preacher in the Liverpool area. Unfortunately he was noted by the wrong people because of his refusal to conform to the standard practices of the Church of England.

Like many who found they could not adhere to the rules of the Church of England, Mather decided to emigrate to the British colonies. With his wife Katherine and their four sons, and after surviving a hurricane, Richard Mather arrived in Boston. Immediately on arrival he began preaching again. He would spend the rest of his days guiding religious life in the colony through his writings, sermons, and participation in synods. Richard had six sons, four of whom became ministers like their father. The family prized learning, so the sons attended Harvard College. The youngest son of Richard was Increase Mather, and he became a key figure in New England society.

Increase followed his studies at Harvard by attending Trinity College, Dublin. The Mather family had fled what they saw as the Popish influences in the Church of England under the Stuart monarchs, but by this time the Puritans under Oliver Cromwell had set up a Commonwealth, so Increase remained in Britain to preach. The return of Charles II from exile made Increase return to New England. In 1681 he was made President of Harvard and shaped how students would study for decades to come by placing a heavy emphasis on Hebrew, Greek, and Biblical studies.

Mather later travelled to London to protest against the actions of governor Edmund Andros who, colonists felt, was no friend to the Puritans. Andros was removed by the colonists following the Glorious Revolution, and Increase Mather worked with the new monarchs William and Mary to have his own choices nominated as council members for the province. He was also given the opportunity to appoint a deputy to the new governor, William Phips. Increase Mather now had immense political power alongside his moral standing.



The Wonders of the Inviſible World:

Being an Account of the

TRYALS

OF

Several Witches,

Lately Excuted in

NEW-ENGLAND:

And of ſeveral remarkable Curioſities therein Occurring.

Together with,

I. Obſervations upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils.

II. A ſhort Narrative of a late outrage committed by a knot of Witches in *Swede-Land*, very much reſembling, and ſo far explaining, that under which *New-England* has laboured.

III. Some Councels directing a due Improvement of the Terrible things lately done by the unuſual and amazing Range of *Evil-Spirits* in *New-England.*

IV. A brief Diſcourſe upon thoſe *Temptations* which are the more ordinary Devices of Satan.

By COTTON MATHER.

Publiſhed by the Special Command of his EXCELLENCY the Governour of the Province of the *Maſſachuſetts-Bay* in *New-England.*

Printed firſt at *Boſtun* in *New-England*; and Reprinted at *Lon-*

Dunton, at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*. 1693.

Increase and Cotton Mather were well known for their hysterical tracts about the threat posed by the supernatural

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

Increase was not prepared for what had been occurring in his absence from the colonies, however. "I found the Country in a sad condition by reason of witchcrafts and possessed persons". The Salem witch panic was in full swing, and his son Cotton Mather was at the centre of it.

Cotton Mather

Cotton Mather was very much his father's son. A zealous Puritan and preacher, Cotton was the prolific author of over 400 texts. He loved learning and was not afraid to stand up for his beliefs. When a smallpox epidemic swept the colonies, he followed the advice of his West African slave Onesimus and championed inoculation. Many were against this practice as either dangerous or in defiance of God's plans. A bomb was placed near his house with a note reading "Cotton Mather, you dog, damn you. I'll inoculate you with this, with a pox to you." Yet Cotton stood his ground, and for his work on inoculation he was made a member of the Royal Society in London.

> "Cotton Mather's book was later to be found in the library of Samuel Parris"

Alongside this scientific outlook, Cotton also held a strong faith in the existence of witchcraft, inherited from this father. In a 1684 work Increase had written up the case of Elizabeth Knap who "… was taken after a very strange manner, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring hideously, with violent motions and agitations of her body, crying out "money, money," etc. … Also the demon belched forth most horrid and nefandous blasphemies, exalting himself above the most High."

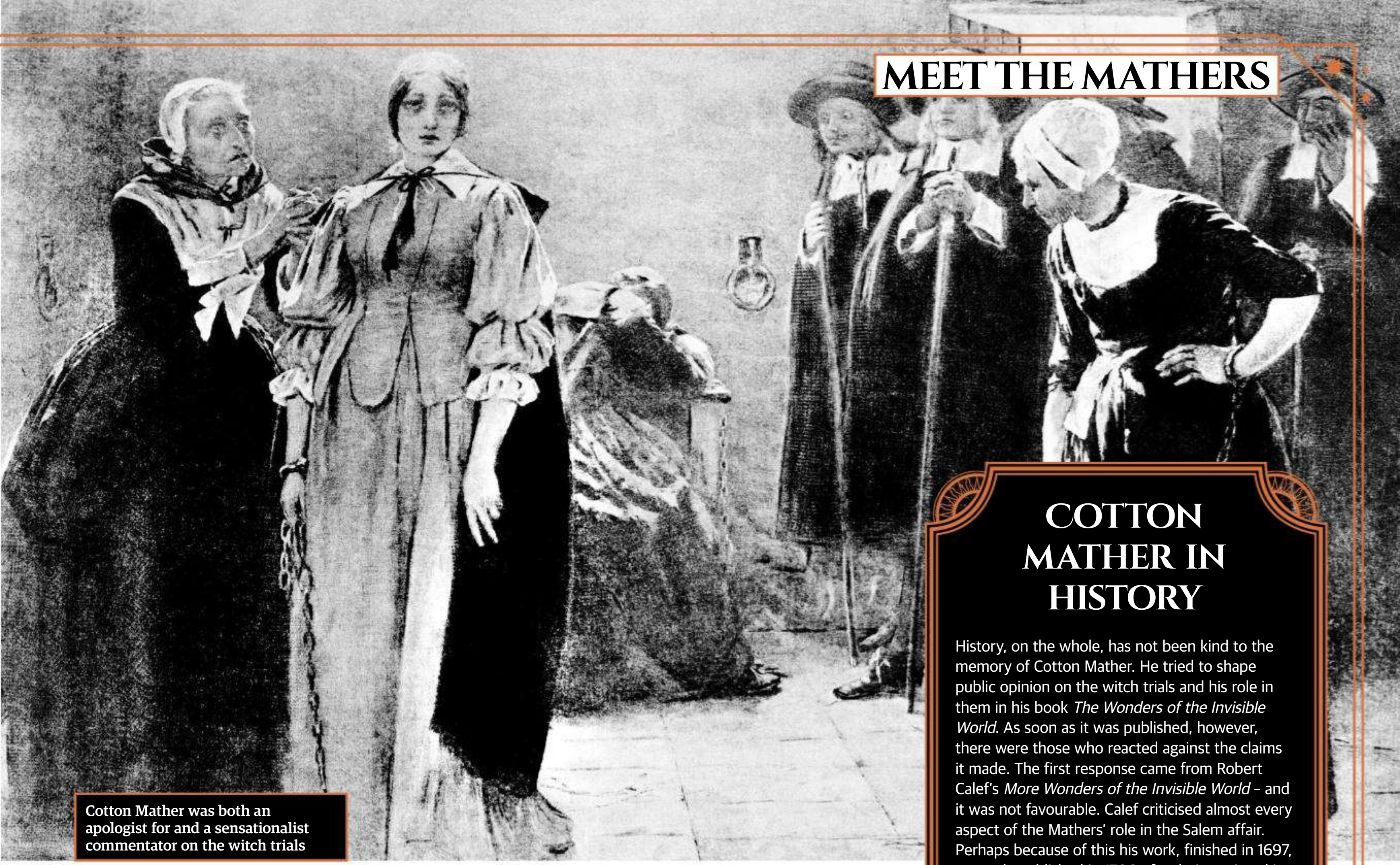
Cotton Mather was not to be outdone by his father in the study of witches, however. In 1688 he witnessed the events surrounding the witchcraft supposedly performed by Goody Glover and wrote it up in a book titled *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions.* This book was later to be found in the library of Samuel Parris, the Salem minister whose house was the starting point for the Salem panic.

Cotton described how the children of the family accused the washerwoman Glover of stealing linen. When Glover argued back the children began to manifest strange illnesses and bizarre behaviours. Glover was brought up on charges of witchcraft. Cotton Mather wrote up her trials with glee, describing her as a 'hag'. When pressed "the hag had not power to deny her interest in the enchantment of the children; and when she was asked, whether she believed there was a God? her answer was too blasphemous and horrible for any pen of mine to mention." Goody Glover was subsequently hanged.

The Glover case offered Cotton proof that there were witches now active in the colonies, even though trials for witchcraft in Europe had long been decreasing. His account became a popular text and brought Cotton a certain amount of fame. It also made it patently obvious to others that a minimal amount of evidence could lead to a successful accusation.

Salem Witch Trials

By the time Increase Mather returned to the colonies with new governor William Phips, many accused witches were languishing in jail. The Mathers were instrumental in setting up the Court of Oyer and Terminer under William Stoughton that would try the cases.



Cotton Mather was both an apologist for and a sensationalist commentator on the witch trials

Image Source ✱ Alamy.

After Bridget Bishop was found guilty and hanged, Phips asked local ministers for advice on how to proceed. The response, probably authored by Cotton, concluded that "we cannot but humbly recommend unto the government, the speedy and vigorous prosecution of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the direction given in the laws of God, and the wholesome statutes of the English nation, for the detection of witchcrafts."

Cotton would remain an advocate for the trials. After 11 people were hanged he wrote to Stoughton to congratulate him on the "extinguishing of as wonderful a piece of devilism as has been seen in the world". When George Burroughs, former minister of Salem village, was to be executed, he proclaimed his innocence and many in the crowd took his side. Cotton Mather, according to one source, was seated on his horse watching and told the people present that Burroughs was no true minister. Besides, "the Devil could sometimes assume the appearance of an Angel of Light". Burroughs was hanged.

Cotton had personal reasons to insist on the real presence of witches in New England. His wife, Maria, lost a newborn in March 1693. Cotton attributed it to witchcraft, as she had seen a horrible spectre in the last weeks of her pregnancy. Increase Mather had also received a letter, possibly from a woman previously accused of witchcraft, saying that his posterity might soon suffer.

Despite the overwhelming number of cases of witchcraft being brought forward, Increase Mather had some reservations over the methods being used to get convictions. Spectral evidence, that was only seen or felt by the afflicted, was not sufficient, he thought, to condemn a person. Cotton could not support this because he feared it would "enable the witch-advocates, very learnedly to cavil and nibble at the late proceedings against the witches". Increase had written "It were better that Ten Suspected Witches should escape, than that one Innocent Person should be Condemned".

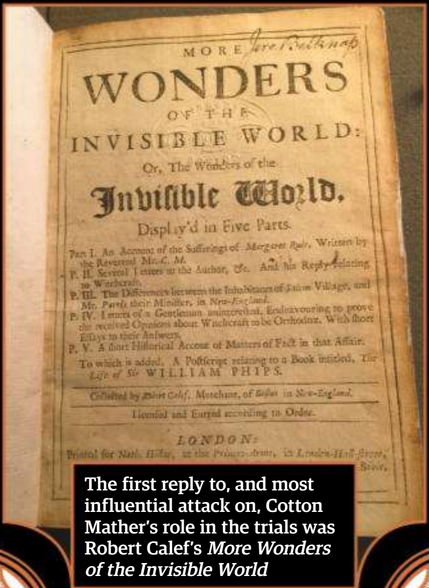
Cotton gathered evidence from the trials of the Salem witches and published a book in defence of them. His *Wonders of the Invisible World* recorded the evidence given against the witches but did not bother to include their answers to the charges. By the time the book was published in 1693, the Salem trials were at an end.

The trials had made Cotton Mather a celebrity of the Puritan colony. Even as the trials became infamous for their abuses, Cotton continued to defend both the trials themselves and his role in them. Witches were still on the prowl and would use any means to "overturn this poor plantation, the Puritan colony". The damage was done, however. Despite the influence of his father and his own intellectual achievements, Cotton would never be granted the presidency of Harvard College that he desired. Some, like the hanged witches, might call that a small price to pay.

COTTON MATHER IN HISTORY

History, on the whole, has not been kind to the memory of Cotton Mather. He tried to shape public opinion on the witch trials and his role in them in his book *The Wonders of the Invisible World.* As soon as it was published, however, there were those who reacted against the claims it made. The first response came from Robert Calef's *More Wonders of the Invisible World* – and it was not favourable. Calef criticised almost every aspect of the Mathers' role in the Salem affair. Perhaps because of this his work, finished in 1697, was only published in 1700 after being printed in London. On arrival in Massachusetts the book was burned in Harvard Yard on the orders of Increase Mather, but the work continued to influence how historians have viewed the Mathers.

Though many in the juries of the Salem trials publicly asked for forgiveness, Cotton never did. Some apologetic historians have attempted to rescue Cotton Mather's reputation. John Demos felt that Mather moderated the worst aspects of the witch hunt. Others have suggested that Mather actually played only a small role in events and therefore cannot be held responsible for the trials. The posthumous trial of Cotton Mather is still awaiting a verdict.



MORE Jere Belknap

WONDERS

OF THE

INVISIBLE WORLD:

Or, The Wonders of the

Inviſible World.

Display'd in Five Parts.

Part I. An Account of the Sufferings of Margaret Rule, Written by the Reverend Mr. C. M.

P. II. Several Letters to the Author, &c. And his Reply relating to Witchcraft.

P. III. The Differences between the Inhabitants of Salem Village, and Mr. Parris their Miniſter, in New-England.

P. IV. Letters of a Gentleman uninterested, Endeavouring to prove the received Opinions about Witchcraft to be Orthodox. With ſhort Eſſays to their Anſwers.

P. V. A ſhort Hiſtorical Account of Matters of Fact in that Affair.

To which is added, A Poſtſcript relating to a Book intitled, The Life of Sir WILLIAM PHIPS.

Collected by Robert Calef, Merchant, of Boston in New-England.

Licensed and Entred according to Order.

LONDON:

Printed for Nath. Hillar, at the Princes-Arms, in Leaden-Hall-Street,

The first reply to, and most influential attack on, Cotton Mather's role in the trials was Robert Calef's *More Wonders of the Invisible World*

Image Source ✱ Lewismr.

The Devil in Salem

The impact of the witch trials did not end with the final executions. What were the long-standing consequences, and what explanations do we have today?

Written by Willow Winsham

Over 300 years have passed since the terrible events that took place in Salem. There have been many attempted explanations for what took place there, from the mundane to the bizarre. What causes lay behind the Salem witch trials?

One of the easiest explanations is that Abigail Williams, Betty Parris, and subsequent victims, were faking their symptoms and lying about their visions. The attention-seeking nature of young girls, especially those restricted by such rigid religious and societal expectations as those in Puritan New England, is seen as the perfect motive for fraudulent accusations. Their fits allowed the girls to behave in ways that would otherwise have been unacceptable. This theory is supported by evidence that on several occasions the girls were caught out in obvious falsehoods.

> Several explanations for Salem have been suggested, from toxic rye poisoning to mass hysteria or hallucinatory illnesses

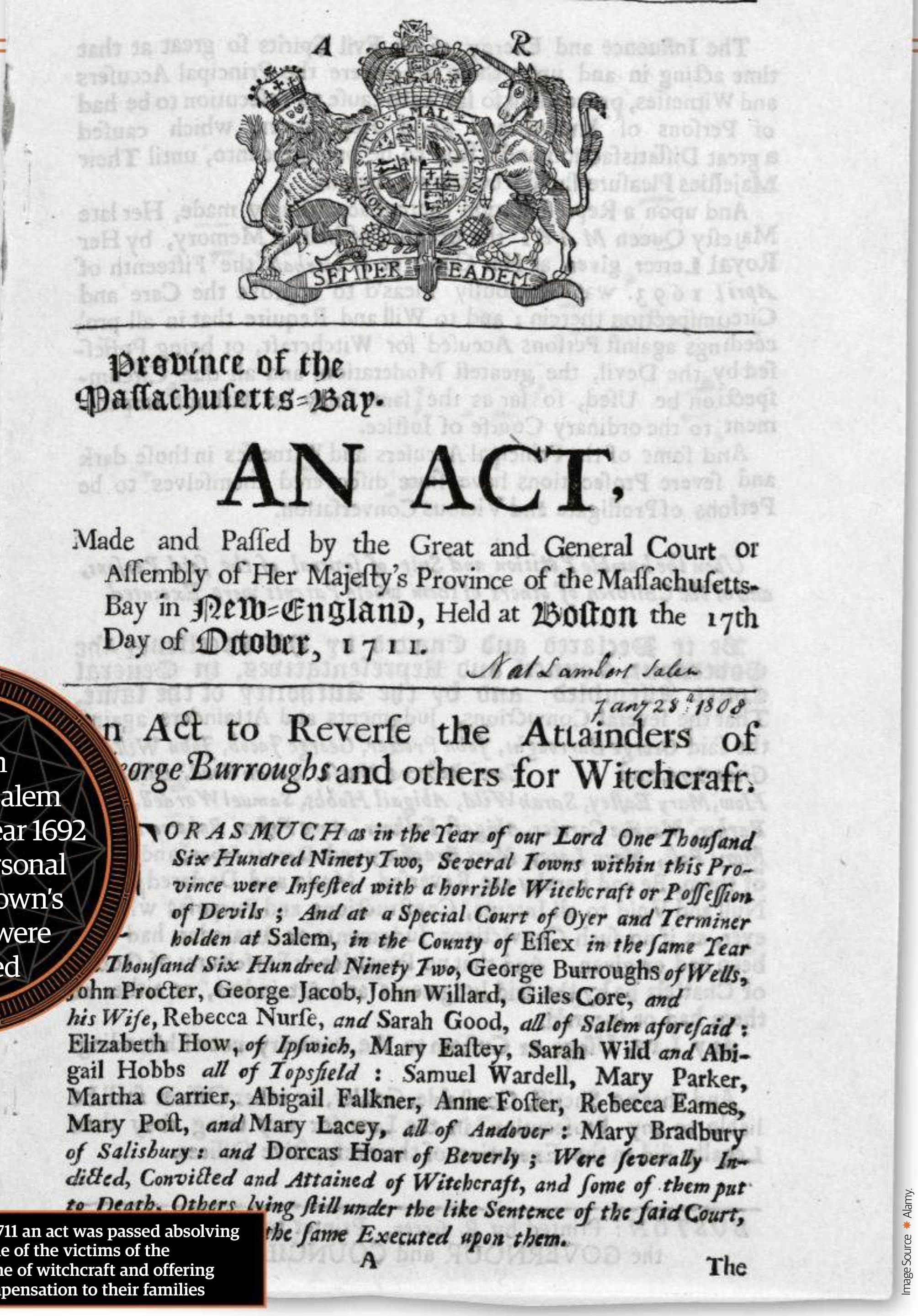
A more recently suggested cause is that the Salem 'victims' were actually suffering from what is today known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a condition that causes both psychological and physical symptoms. Several of the accusers suffered to varying degrees during Native American attacks as part of the ongoing conflict of King William's War. Mercy Short lost her parents and three of her siblings in the raid on Salmon Falls in 1689. Mercy herself, along with several other siblings, were captured and taken to Canada, a journey during which she witnessed more horror and bloodshed until she was freed, eight months later. Similarly, Mercy Lewis and her family had witnessed untold horrors in Falmouth, Maine; her grandparents, two uncles and several cousins were killed. It has been suggested that these two girls along with others had witnessed things too awful to process, their fear and hatred of the Native American attackers transferring to the witches, perceived as an equal threat to the Puritans of Salem.

Another popular theory, originating in the 1970s, is that ergotism, caused by poisoned rye, was to blame. Ergot fungus infected the supply of rye – the most common grain used for bread in the area – due to damp weather and storage conditions, and the people of Salem were in turn infected when eating bread. Symptoms of ergot poisoning include headaches, muscle spasms, seizures and hallucinations. This explanation has been largely debunked in recent times, one argument against it being that heavy vitamin A deficiency, one common correlation of ergotism, was not convincingly noticeable in Salem. Other physiological causes suggested include Lyme disease and encephalitis lethargica, which

For years the very location of the Salem executions was wiped from memory: the long-held belief they took place on Gallows Hill was disproved in 2016

Image Source • Getty Images

> "The political and social situation in Salem has also come under scrutiny"



Province of the Maſſachuſetts-Bay.

AN ACT,

Made and Paſſed by the Great and General Court or Aſſembly of Her Majeſty's Province of the Maſſachuſetts-Bay in New-England, Held at Boſton the 17th Day of October, 1711.

Nat Lambert Salem

Jany 28th 1808

n Act to Reverſe the Attainders of orge Burroughs and others for Witchcraft.

ORASMUCH *as in the Year of our Lord One Thouſand Six Hundred Ninety Two, Several Towns within this Province were Infeſted with a horrible Witchcraft or Poſſeſſion of Devils ; And at a Special Court of Oyer and Terminer holden at* Salem, *in the County of* Eſſex *in the ſame Year Thouſand Six Hundred Ninety Two*, George Burroughs *of Wells*, ohn Procter, George Jacob, John Willard, Giles Core, *and his Wife*, Rebecca Nurſe, *and* Sarah Good, *all of Salem aforeſaid* : Elizabeth How, *of Ipſwich*, Mary Eaſtey, Sarah Wild *and* Abigail Hobbs *all of Topsfield* : Samuel Wardell, Mary Parker, Martha Carrier, Abigail Falkner, Anne Foſter, Rebecca Eames, Mary Poſt, *and* Mary Lacey, *all of Andover* : Mary Bradbury *of Salisbury : and* Dorcas Hoar *of Beverly ; Were ſeverally Indicted, Convicted and Attained of Witchcraft, and ſome of them put to Death, Others lying ſtill under the like Sentence of the ſaid Court,* *the ſame Executed upon them.*

A

The

In 1711 an act was passed absolving some of the victims of the crime of witchcraft and offering compensation to their families

Image Source ✱ Alamy

> Many people in and around Salem removed the year 1692 from their personal diaries. The town's documents were also purged

causes symptoms including tremors, changes in behaviour, double vision and fever.

What of the belief in and practice of folk magic? Tales of the girls of Salem taking part in fortune telling activities, often at the behest of Tituba, are a popular part of the traditional Salem narrative. As attractive as this might be, especially in light of later events, on close examination there is no contemporary evidence to support this as fact: the counter magic of Mary Sibley's witch cake was the first documented use of magic of any kind in the tale.

The political and social situation in 17th century Salem has also come under scrutiny. Disputes over who should be the minister in Salem Village had been ongoing for some time; three had come and gone in just over 15 years, and at the very time of the trials fresh disputes were currently taking place regarding the suitability of Samuel Parris for the role. Such uncertainty and disruption could have allowed events to spiral out of control.

Where economic factors are concerned, the Little Ice Age that took place between 1500 and 1800 has been cited as a contributory cause of the spate of witchcraft accusations. This significantly colder period marked a time of food shortages and general economic downturn, affecting populations across the United States and Europe. Scapegoating and witchcraft persecutions characterised this economic shift, as also seen in the European witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries.

One theory that has been largely cast into doubt is that of factionalism within Salem, between the poorer, agrarian inhabitants of Salem Village, and the more prosperous merchants who inhabited Salem Town. This was expressed as an East/West divide, and earlier theories suggested that this was reflected in the pattern of accusations. Fresh data, however, has shown that such a divide is simplistic at best, and that subtle nuances and differences existed that further lessen the convincing nature of this idea.

Whatever the cause, in the aftermath of such terrible occurrences, many Salem residents wanted nothing more than to forget what had taken place. The Salem Village transaction book was re-transcribed by Thomas Putnam to obliterate any mention of witchcraft trials and witches; from 27 January to 7 December, there is just a blanket statement that events were too terrible to record. Similarly, no record of deaths from executions from that period remained. Despite being known for his attention to detail, there is nothing covering the trials in the diary of Samuel Sewall, the pages for 1692 conspicuous by their absence. This was not peculiar to Sewall, with several diaries of the period omitting mention of the Salem trials. Even the location of the hangings was not recorded. Through such rewriting and omissions, it was hoped the tragedy could be removed from the pages of history itself. It was not only the accusers who did so either – the families of those who had perished likewise could not

MARGARET SCOTT
HANGED
SEPT 22 1692

A bench bearing the name and date of execution of each victim of the Salem Witch Trials commemorates the terrible events of 1692 and ensures they are not forgotten

Image Source ✱ Dana Huff from Roswell, GA, USA bring themselves to make mention of witches and witchcraft, even in their applications for redress. On the whole, although it was agreed that terrible events had taken place, precious few admitted that they had personally committed wrongs. Many claimed being unable to remember what had taken place or what they had said and done, a convenient refuge from the damning truth.

Although the hangings were at an end, and those suspects that remained pardoned, it was not an end for many of the accused. Poverty meant they were unable to pay their debts for their time in prison, and so they remained under lock and key. Tituba was one such unfortunate: left to rot by Samuel Parris, she was finally released in 1693 when her jail debts were paid by an unknown benefactor.

Those who regained their physical freedom often did so at a cost. Although they had their life in a physical sense, legally and in some cases socially, they were as good as dead. The experience of Elizabeth Proctor, who escaped the noose due to pregnancy, was all too common – with her dead husband's lands and property seized, she had nothing to return to, and no power to reclaim her home or possessions.

Some did admit their part in matters to varying degrees. In January 1697, a day of reflection and fasting was held to remember the events of 1692, and Samuel Sewall confessed his guilt before those assembled. Along with him, 12 who had acted as jurors asked for forgiveness in a signed declaration – the Devil was to blame for their error in judgement. For each remaining year of his life, Sewall observed a day of fasting and prayer – he did this until his death in 1730. But involvement in the witch trials did not harm the reputation of William Stoughton. He went on to become the next governor of Massachusetts.

Accused of lying and blamed by many for what had occurred, Samuel Parris' days in Salem Village were numbered. Although he gave £6 of his salary two years in a row in a display of repentance, he was finally expelled from office in 1696. Leaving Salem, he pursued a variety of work, remarrying and raising a new family. His replacement, Joseph Green, handled matters delicately. With a new meetinghouse a short distance away and sensitive seating arrangements, he enabled the community to begin to heal and, tentatively, start anew.

It is perhaps not surprising that the families of those left behind had a battle on their hands to receive restitution or to have their names cleared.

> It took until 2001 before all of the people who were convicted during the Salem witch trials were declared innocent

It was not until 1711 that a general amnesty was passed – and even then, six of the accused witches were excluded. Equally shocking, it was only in that year that payments finally began to the families of those who had suffered. In 1957, further victims were cleared, but it was not until 2001 that finally all of those convicted were named and declared innocent.

One of the more positive and long-term outcomes of the trials at Salem was the impact on the American judicial system. The introduction of legal representation for the accused was one eventual consequence, as was the introduction of questioning the other party. It was also in part due to the Salem trials that "innocent until proven guilty" became the rule, in theory at least, in US courts. The end of the trials also saw the beginning of the decline in Puritanism in New England and beyond. The idea of a necessary separation between church and state likewise took hold, marking a long-lasting impact of the witchcraft trials. The Puritan mindset lost much of its political power. Salem has been called "the rock on which the theocracy broke".

Rye poisoned by ergot fungus was once a popular explanation for the Salem witch trials. Symptoms include numbness, itching, muscle weakness, convulsions and nausea

Image Source ✱ Bildoj

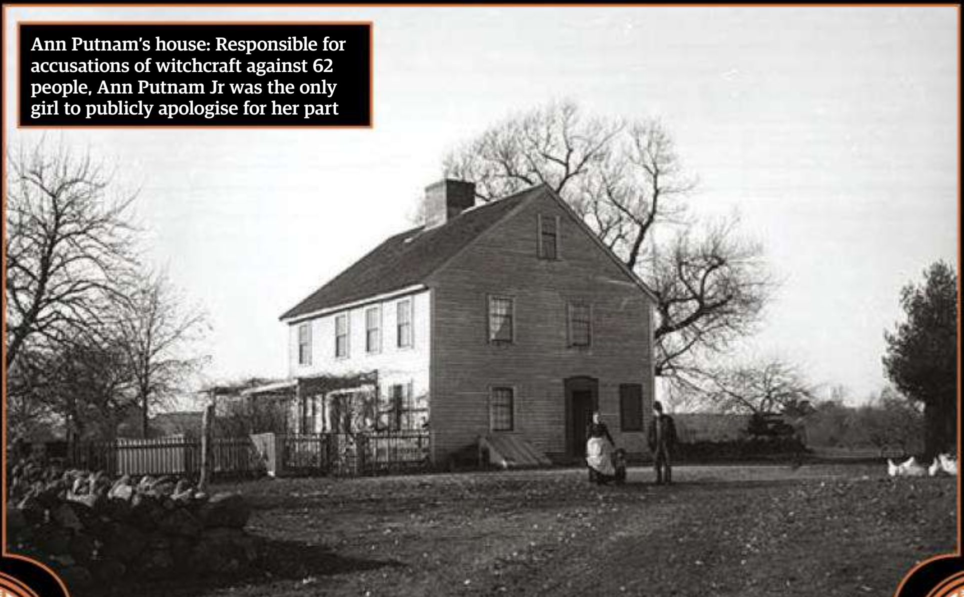
FATE OF THE ACCUSERS

How did the girls themselves react to events?

Over 50 per cent of the girls and young women who made accusations at Salem in 1692 seem to have put the past behind them, marrying and having families of their own. Betty Hubbard moved away, marrying in 1711, Abigail Hobbs likewise married and had children, as did Mary Walcott and Betty Parris.

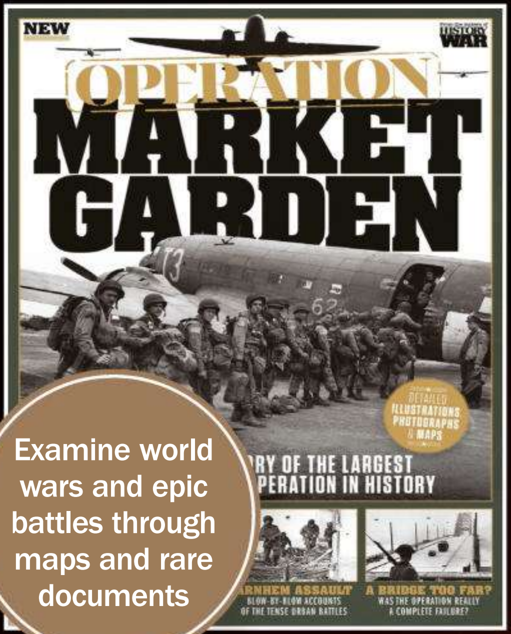
Ann Putnam Junior was the only one of the girls to not only admit wrongdoing but also beg forgiveness in 1706. She claimed the Devil had tricked her into speaking out falsely against innocent people, and she expressed great remorse for her part in the Salem trials. She died in 1715, unmarried and childless. Susannah Sheldon faced a turbulent future. Moving to Providence, Rhode Island, she was known as a person of 'ill fame', and was warned out of town by the Providence council. Deeply troubled in mind, it is believed she died, unmarried, by 1697. Mercy Short married, but was later excommunicated for adultery.

Abigail Williams, however, who was one of the initial instigators of the tragic events of 1692, vanished from the historical record. Her fate and whereabouts are unknown to this day.



Ann Putnam's house: Responsible for accusations of witchcraft against 62 people, Ann Putnam Jr was the only girl to publicly apologise for her part

Image Source ✱ Public Domain Author Unknown.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A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

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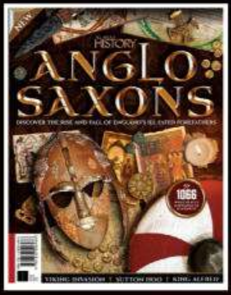
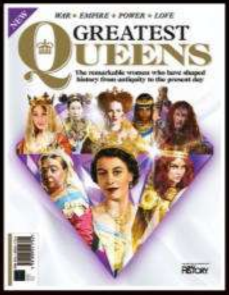

ANGLO SAXONS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NEW
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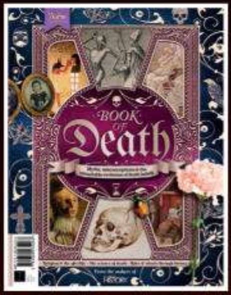
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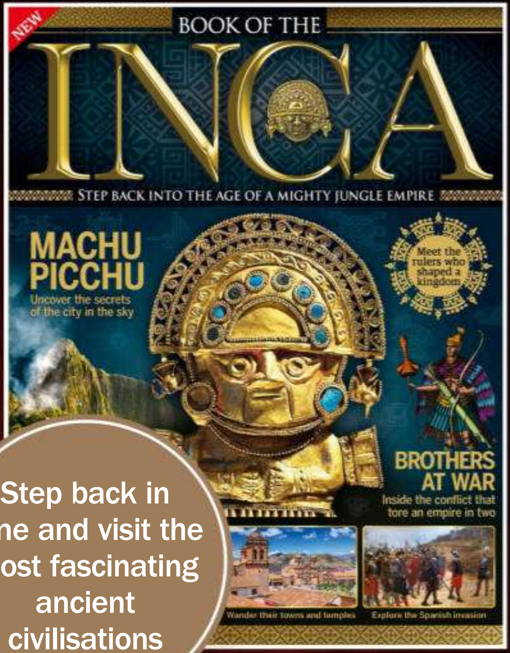
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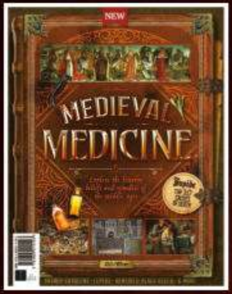
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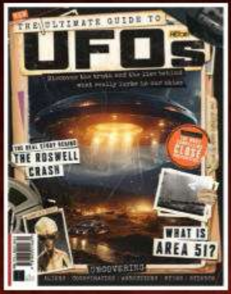
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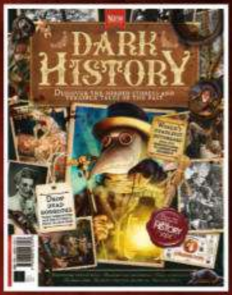
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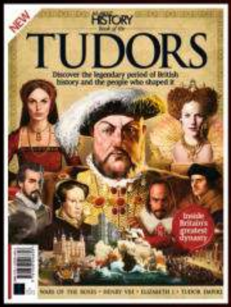

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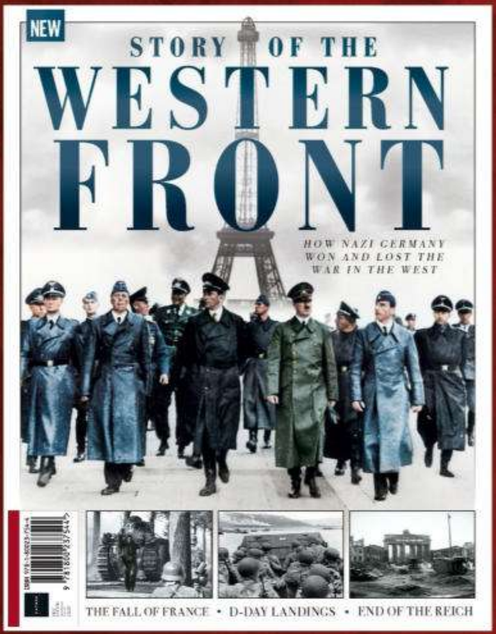
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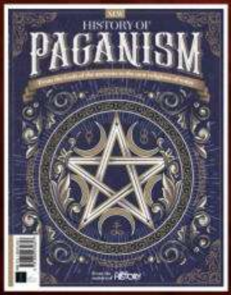
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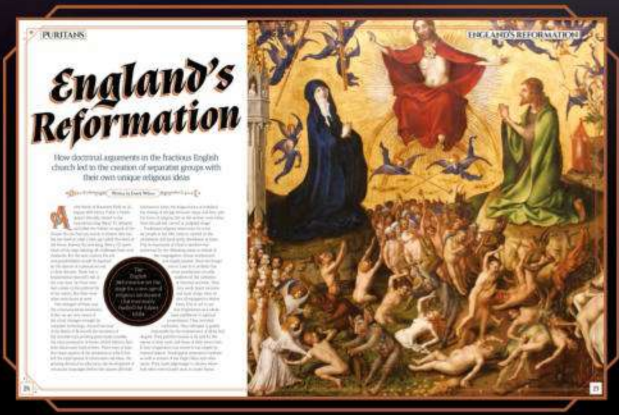
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